



HIMALAYA, the Journal of the Association for Nepal and Himalayan Studies

Volume 21
Number 2 *Himalayan Research Bulletin*

Article 17

2001

Conference Digest

Follow this and additional works at: <https://digitalcommons.macalester.edu/himalaya>

Recommended Citation

. 2001. Conference Digest. *HIMALAYA* 21(2).

Available at: <https://digitalcommons.macalester.edu/himalaya/vol21/iss2/17>

This Other is brought to you for free and open access by the DigitalCommons@Macalester College at DigitalCommons@Macalester College. It has been accepted for inclusion in HIMALAYA, the Journal of the Association for Nepal and Himalayan Studies by an authorized administrator of DigitalCommons@Macalester College. For more information, please contact scholarpub@macalester.edu.



CONFERENCE ABSTRACTS

THE 30th ANNUAL CONFERENCE ON SOUTH ASIA
MADISON, WISCONSIN OCTOBER 18-21, 2001

NATURE AND NATION: PERSPECTIVES FROM
INDIA AND NEPAL

Gunnel Cederlöf, Uppsala University

**The Sovereign State and the Subjects' Right in Nature:
India Under Company Rule**

After forest lands were ceded to the East India Company in the early nineteenth century, the principles of land settlement came into conflict with the local livelihoods of people engaged in nomadic pastoralism and shifting cultivation. In the southern part of the subcontinent, where less violent and organized resistance against encroaching state power existed, the legal sphere became a prominent battlefield for determining rights in land and resources. A common argument concerning colonial forestry emphasizes that nature was perceived in a purely technical way, as resources to be conquered, controlled, and utilized for their market value. In this "colonial project" people were "tribalized" and marginalized within an orientalist discourse. However, this paper shows that in first encounters, local people were a major concern of East India Company officials, and the interests of the Madras government and Company officials contrasted at times sharply with those voiced by representatives of the Crown. In the administration, support for direct relationships between government and subject, free market ideals, and individual proprietary rights stood against the vision of supporting intermediaries between state and subjects, preferences for Company trade, and state sovereignty. As will be argued, in this contested domain, people locally found space for negotiation on rights in nature. Depending on support within the state, they could delay decisions, obstruct orders, and refuse to comply with demands to give up land.

Bengt Karlsson, Uppsala University

**Indigenous Natures: The Politics of Forest and Ethnicity
in Meghalaya, Northeast India**

This paper will deal with the movement against forest reservation in the Garo Hills in the early 20th century, a movement that succeeded in putting a halt to further reservations and out of which a new type of ethnic politics and leadership among the Garos evolved. The Garo Hills is situated in the eastern part of the present Indian State of Meghalaya. In contrast to the general situation in India, the bulk of the forests in Meghalaya and other hill states of Northeast India are under communal management and ownership. The colonial state applied a policy of minimal governance in these out-of-the-way tracts and some aspects of it have also survived into the postcolonial period (provisions for local autonomy under the sixth schedule of the Indian constitution). The paper will further address the contemporary politics of forest in Meghalaya, and above all discuss the controversial Supreme Court Order of 1996 through which a moratorium on felling and transport of timber has been imposed. The "timber ban," as it is referred to locally, has triggered debates about Delhi imposing unjust rules that threaten the livelihoods of people who depend on the forest, and, as such, fueling autonomy demands and ethnic politics.

Nina Bhatt, Yale University

**King of the Jungle: Constructing Bureaucratic Identity
in Nepal's National Park Services**

While the politics of forest management in Nepal has received intense attention at the local, national, and international levels, there is little attention to the culture of government bureaucrats who work in these contexts. Despite the influx of donor aid, conservation ideologies, and international development programs, the nature of the Nepalese state and its bureaucratic workers invariably involved in these projects remains an elusive object of analysis. By combining ethnographic with historical/textual materials, this paper examines official ideologies, the discourses and practices of governance, and the cultural and political prac-

tices whereby national park bureaucrats construct their identities as officials of His Majesty's Government of Nepal. The historical component of this paper seeks to illuminate the ways in which the Royal Regime shaped bureaucratic identity and thus induced certain patterns of relations, behaviors, aspirations, and ideologies before the 1990 democratic revolution. The ethnographic research focuses on contemporary constructions of identity in the framework of Nepal's post-1990 democracy. By examining the political-economic and cultural dilemmas of Nepalese state functionaries, much is revealed about the politics of governance, identity construction, and state making which challenge received ideas about South Asian bureaucracies.

Christopher Tarnowski, University of Georgia
Mis-/Placing Nature and Locating the Environment in the Fetishization of Development

The proliferation and merging of environmental, development, and community-based programs is having profound implications for how nature is imagined and the environment managed. While nature may be losing ground in Nepal, an imperiled environment is increasingly subjected to global environmental agendas and national development ambitions. Implicit in much of these global and national imperatives is an imagined nation-state that belies the contested and fragmentary character of variably positioned efforts to secure access to resources in the name of development and the environment. For example, the recent rise in conflicts in Nepal, whether Maoist or ethnicity-based, renders problematic the de-politicized, de-localized rhetoric of a community-based discourse. While the impact that these conflicts have in reshaping the nation and/or nature remains to be seen, the popularity of Community Forestry, arguably one of Nepal's most successful modernist schemes, has contributed greatly to the escalation of environmental managerialism, in which both nature and local-state relations are increasingly being reconfigured. This paper explores these issues using forests and trees as they serve multiple, ever-changing roles as signifiers of nature, a political symbol, a source of livelihood, as a site of and for biodiversity, and a resource to be managed and exploited for the national good.

HIMALAYAN SUBSISTENCE AND IMMIGRATION

John J. Metz, Northern Kentucky University
The Evolving Agroforestry System of Chimkhola, an Upper Slope Village Of West Central Nepal

The Pun Magars of Chimkhola village control over 40 km² of fields and forests between 1550 and 4500 m of Dhaulagiri

Himal. Rainfall is usually sufficient to raise both summer and winter crops on the 67 named areas of out-sloping agricultural terraces, which are distributed widely between 1550 and 2450 m. The current farming system divides fields into 7 groups, which are aggregated into 3 macro groups, each of which is in a different year of a 3 year rotation. Because fields are widely scattered, farmers fertilize their fields by holding livestock on fields for one to several weeks after each crop is harvested but before the next is planted. This system produces a complex pattern of sequential herd movements and crop plantings from one of the 7 subgroups to another in both the spring and autumn planting seasons. During times when all fields are planted, herders take their livestock into the forests, where they supplement the food the animals graze and browse with fodder cut from forest trees. This system is gradually transforming the forests into shrublands. The increasing scarcity of fodder and of labor, as working-age men leave for wage labor jobs around the world, suggest that this 3 year rotation system will not long endure.

Michael Rechlin, Principia College
A Passion for Pine: Forestry Practices of the Apatani People of Arunachal Pradesh

Forest degradation and resource scarcity are the norm throughout the Himalayan region. In the Indian state of Arunachal Pradesh, however, there is a small tribal group that takes resource management seriously. The Apatani valley, described by a former Chief Minister as "An Island of Green" in the Arunachal landscape, is dotted with private plantations of Blue Pine (*Pinus wallichiana*) and surrounded by native forests that are rigidly controlled by tribal clans. This paper examines the forest management practices of the Apatani people. Data on forest growth and consumption patterns show that the Apatani are achieving a sustained yield of forest products from their private plantations. We suggest that the tribal history of the Apatani people and the geographic location of the Apatani Valley have led to the development of a culture distinctive in the degree to which it values forest conservation. It is a culture where people feel compelled to plant trees for future generations and where trees, like other family valuables, are kept under lock and key.

Mohan N. Shrestha, Bowling Green University
Nepalese Emigration to South Asia: An Historical Perspective

Nepal was once a haven for people who wanted to escape from social injustice, political prosecutions, and economic poverty. However, after the unification of various indepen-

dent principalities that existed in the west and the east of the Kathmandu Valley during the later part of the 18th century, internal as well as external migration of people increased significantly. This political unification made it easier for people to move to different areas of the country. The government also encouraged people to bring more land under cultivation to increase its revenue. The migration pattern during these times was from the western and central parts to the eastern part of Nepal. This internal migration brought about some social conflict between the newcomers, the Khasa people, and the indigenous Kirantas. During that period many Kirantas left the country and moved east into Darjeeling, Sikkim, Bhutan and Assam. As the population density increased and the economy became stagnant, people start emigrating to Northern India. At present, there are about five million Nepalese in India; three million are in rural areas and remaining two million are in urban areas. The geographical pattern of distribution of Nepalese emigrants in India has changed significantly during the last few decades. This paper will further discuss the origin and destinations of recent emigrants.

WATERSHEDS OF INQUIRY: JOHN THAYER HITCHCOCK'S HIMALYAN AND SOUTH ASIAN LEGACY PART I

Tom Fricke, University of Michigan

A Taste Shared: Reflecting John Hitchcock and the Good in Fieldwork

Although John Hitchcock never wrote a sustained book-length treatment of the subjective and moral aspects of his South Asian research, clues to his position are contained in his shorter writings. Many of his essays and chapters foreshadow more recent concerns with fieldwork ethics, reflexivity (not a word he would have used!), and personal relations with the people being studied. This paper discusses anthropological fieldwork as experience, as methodological stance, and as moral imperative through the lens of Hitchcock's work and his influence on his students. It takes off especially from themes raised in Hitchcock's memories of his informant, Surat Singh, and his later essay, *Fieldwork in Gurkha Country*, moving back and forth from Hitchcock's own reflections to more general themes turning on the ethics of fieldwork and the role of personal disposition and experience in the encounter with cultural others. The perspective here is personal, from the point of view of a former student, but the lessons are more general. Illustrations come from reminiscence, letters, and journals from both student and mentor.

Stephen Mikesell, UW - Madison

The Legacy of John Hitchcock's Cultural Ecology in the Anthropology of Himalaya

John Hitchcock attempted one of the earliest tests of Julian Steward's cultural ecological thesis in a comparison of two Magar villages in Nepal, nearly at the same time that Frederick Barth was doing a similar kind of study in Afghanistan. In this work he attempted to compare two Magar villages at different ecological zones, controlling for language and other cultural variables. He did not think that things were as straightforward as others, such as Barth, made them out to be. Hitchcock also brought cultural ecological assumptions to some of his work on other subjects such as caste. This paper will look at Hitchcock's attempts to test his approach to cultural ecology in the Himalaya, analyze how successful it was, discuss the problems that he came across in the study, and identify cultural ecology strains in his other works. Finally, it will position Hitchcock's work within the general development of ecological scholarship in the Himalayas and will identify the legacy left by him.

Maureen Durkin, Columbia University

Abstract not available

WATERSHEDS OF INQUIRY: JOHN THAYER HITCHCOCK'S HIMALYAN AND SOUTH ASIAN LEGACY PART II

Discussant: Jim Fisher

Gregory G. Maskarinec, University of Hawaii

Stability of Oral Texts among Shamans of the Bhuj Valley, Western Nepal

As the first anthropologist to report on shamans of Western Nepal, in 1961/62 and again in 1967, John T. Hitchcock documented the vibrant shamanic complex found in the Bhuj Valley on the border of Baglung and Rukum Districts of Western Nepal. During those early field trips, Professor Hitchcock recorded 40 hours of shaman oral texts. These tapes include three dictated repertoires, preserving some 10,000 lines of the narrative poems that shamans publicly recite as a key part of every divination, curing, and worship ceremony. Having completed a preliminary transcription and translation of these tapes, last year (2000) I revisited the Bhuj Valley, obtained the cooperation of the second and third generation descendants and students of the three key shamans whom Professor Hitchcock recorded, and taped their contemporary repertoires. This paper reports my preliminary findings, foremost of which is

an extremely high degree of textual stability and integrity despite forty years of intervening social, political, and economic change throughout Nepal.

David Holmberg, Cornell University
Magical Power and Politics in Tamang Shamanic Soundings

This paper is conceived as a contribution to the study of Himalayan shamanic traditions the study of which was initiated in a serious anthropological sense by John Hitchcock. In particular, it examines how wang or magical power and related concepts are articulated in Tamang curative practice and imagination. Wang and other forms of symbolic power manipulated in shamanic soundings, I argue, constitute the alienated capacity of individuals to cure themselves in rhetorical terms that are best understood in Tamang sociologies. Particular attention will be devoted to how Tamang shamanic journeys enact this power and how the psychologies of affliction and curing are inseparable from sociopolitical life.

Alfred Pach, University of Chicago
Gender, Illness and Society in a Hindu Village in Nepal

John Hitchcock provided some of the earliest descriptions of the interstitial social position of women and shamans in Nepal. He noted how particular asymmetrical demographic and social circumstances of women within the hills of Nepal led to their disproportionate rates of distressful psychosocial experience. He was also among the first to describe how the "interpretative openness" of fits of unsolicited possession and unconsciousness were designated as socially meaningful through the exercise of particular social and cultural processes. This paper builds on these perspectives to explore how the forms, meanings, and distribution of fits of unsolicited possession and unconsciousness, most prominently known as the illness category of *chhopuwa* in a Jaisi Brahman village, are differentially designated and responded to among men and women. Many accounts of *chhopuwa* indicate its alignment with certain social positions within particular household relations. However, as a descriptive and explanatory construct variously associated with a range of behavior, it retains an interpretative openness and ambiguity. Though it often emerges within particular social positions and structures of feeling among women, it is not wholly confined to them or separate from their own considerations

MEMORY AND FORGETTING IN CONTEMPORARY NEPAL

Susan Hangen, University of Pittsburgh
"We must dig out the true history of this land": Narratives of the Past and Boycotts of the Dasain Festival in Nepal

During the last decade in Nepal, leaders of the ethnic political organizations like the Mongol National Organization (MNO) have called for ethnic minorities to boycott Dasain, the country's largest national festival. The MNO argues that Dasain celebrates the Hindu conquering of ethnic minorities in mythical and historical times. Through Dasain boycotts, the MNO dramatizes its political project of ending Hindu dominance in Nepal. In this paper, I show how the Dasain boycotts highlight a disjuncture between two different modes of relating to the past: the narratives that MNO calls the "true history" of Dasain and people's lived, local memories of the festival. I analyze the multiple interpretations of and reactions to the Dasain boycott in a village where the MNO gained considerable popular support. While MNO activists sought to impose a singular meaning on the holiday through forwarding a collectively shared history of Dasain, in practice the Dasain boycotts had a range of meanings. While people asserted that they boycotted Dasain, they continued some of the festival's hallmark activities, and began to hold weddings during Dasain. Thus, they did not renounce their recent memories of Dasain as a celebration of kinship ties and as a time of plenty.

Laura Kunreuther, Bard College
"A brother will forget": Cultural History of Family Memory and Inheritance Law in Nepal

One of the most hotly debated political issues of the 1990s in Kathmandu was a controversial proposal to reform the current laws of inheritance. Activists working for this reform argue that women should have a right to their parents' ancestral property (*amsa*) and that the current laws are unconstitutional. The popular response to the proposal has been angry opposition by both men and women alike. "Brothers will forget about us," many women said. "This law will 'kill the love' (*maya marne*) between brothers and sisters." In this paper, I focus specifically on the anxiety created by the reform movement and the language in which the debates were framed. I show that activists, rather than simply advocating a reform for 'equal rights,' intend instead to create through this legal proposal a shift in the organization and practices of memory.

Laura M. Ahearn, Rutgers University
Constructing a Past Together: Memory in Nepali Love Letters and Political Speeches

Memory is at the same time both personal and political. In this paper, I examine how Nepalis construct their pasts together through language. Drawing on a corpus of over 200 Nepali love letters and on the transcript of a two-hour-long Nepali politician's speech, I trace some of the personal and cultural aspects of memory. I argue that passages in the love letters that focus explicitly on memory help the writers to create a new sense of personhood—one that is much more individualistic than previous Nepali conceptions of personhood. In these letters, we can see individuals taking precedence over extended families as couples co-construct pasts for themselves that exclude outsiders. Similarly, many janajati politicians in Nepal attempt to establish an identity for their ethnic groups by constructing unique versions of history that exclude or diminish the importance of other ethnic groups or castes. In an analysis of a speech by Gore Bahadur Khapangi Magar, I illustrate how one politician evokes memories of a Magar past for his audience in order to create in his listeners an awareness of their ethnic identity. In both the love letters and Khapangi's speech, memory is intertwined with identity, emotion, and personhood.

Kathryn S. March, Cornell University
Song and Memory

Tamang songs from highland Nepal are remarkable feats of memory. In the simplest sense, they are so because they are very long and very poetic. They are the more so, too, because they (re)create for singer and audience remembered places and times with an acutely emotional, almost Proustian, visceral reality. But insofar as memory also involves structured forgetting, these songs efface sentiment, they memorialize, and to some degree reconfigure or distance experience by subsuming it to an aesthetic. This paper looks at three genres of Tamang song—klangpi (or dora) hwai (playful dancing repartee song), namtar (mythic origin song), and bomsang (personal lament)—to explore the various ways in which they, on the one hand, recall, even reproduce, the intensity of experience and, on the other, recast and reframe it, if not to completely dull it, at least to refract it through lenses of culture. Two pivots, then, are at stake in this analysis of the ways in which memory (both recall and erasure) lies in: (a) the more emotive balanced against the more cognitive and (b) the more personal balanced against the more collective.

MARGINAL PEOPLES AND WANDERING BORDERS:
THE INTEGRATION OF AUTONOMOUS REGIONS
AND UNRULY SPACES INTO THE PAKISTANI STATE

Discussant: Saeed Shafqat, Columbia University

Chad Haines, University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill
Traversing the State: Travel and the Postcolonial State in Northern Pakistan

State formation is a cultural revolution that enables particular behaviors while simultaneously attempting to curb others. The processes of state formation are not always overt, predicated on modes of coercion, real or imagined. In enabling certain behaviors, perspectives, and practices, the state works through subjects, naturalizing its presence as an everyday reality. The postcolonial Pakistani state, as an institution, has been a failure in the region of Gilgit. Yet, its presence there is pervasive, particularly as structured by the Karakoram Highway, built in the 1970s. In this paper, I discuss how state formation is being enacted, encoded, and inscribed through changing patterns of geographical mobility. The paper is exploratory, opening new realms of understanding state formation through tourism, trade, out migration, shifting of government agents, and internal migration.

Cabeiri deBergh-Robinson, Cornell University
From the Camp to the Village: Territorializing Refuge in Azad Jammu and Kashmir

Since 1947, the Line of Control which divides the former Princely State of Jammu and Kashmir into territories administered and claimed by Pakistan and India has come increasingly to function as a border. During the wars of 1947-1949, 1965, 1971 and the current armed conflict in the Valley of Kashmir, refugees have crossed this dividing line and settled in camps and villages in Azad Jammu and Kashmir and Pakistan. In some cases their migrations were planned and intentional, the refugees acutely aware of the presence and location of borders and the competing claims of regional and national centers of authority and power; in some cases their migrations were less reflective and more determined by the construction of new borders and the impossibility of return, as people became refugees only miles from what had always been their homes. By examining the organization of ritual labor in a refugee camp and a refugee village, this paper examines the ways in which refugees, migrants, and internally displaced persons in Azad Jammu and Kashmir manage and memorialize experiences of loss and separation and negotiate claims made upon them as political subjects in the struggle between states to secure legitimacy for claims on the polity and territory of Jammu and Kashmir.

Julie Flowerday, University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill
Hunza Scales into Pakistan: The Waistline of a Marginal Region in the Belly of a State

In this paper, the corporate process of interchange between symbolic center and periphery is examined through food, a source that nourishes a body polity from sacred to profane. In little more than fifty years, Hunza in the Northern Areas of Pakistan was moved from an insular Mirship (rulership) under British colonial control to a subdivision of the Gilgit District in the state of Pakistan. Formerly, the Mir's Fort was filled and emptied, like a great underbelly of the society, recreated and cultivated through the life pursuits of its agricultural inhabitants. By the 1990s the Fort was a museum and "national state treasure". In its symbolic transformation from royal residence to international showpiece, the Fort larder had been cleaned of its produce, its prison cavern flooded by light, and its residential quarters stripped of their shadowy warmth and secrecy. The Fort, like the Mirship, was barren. Hunza was now in the belly of the State. The corporate process of nation building lends itself to metamorphic inscriptions of scales, waistline, and belly.

RECENT RESEARCH ON BUDDHIST PHILOSOPHY

Jim Blumenthal, Oregon State University

Do Other Maadhyamikans Attain Buddhahood?: A Critical Evaluation of dGe-lugs Analysis of kleshavvara and jneyavarana in the Madhyamaka Thought of Shantaraksitaita

This paper investigates the way in which Tsong-kha-pa and his dGe-lugs-pa followers critique Īantarakita and the so-called 'Yogācāra-Svātantrika-Madhyamaka' positions concerning requirements for the attainment of Buddhahood, ultimately concluding that followers of that position will not attain Buddhahood in reliance on such a position. In particular, we will examine the dGe-lugs-pa critiques of Īantarakita's views on the status of afflictive emotion obstacles (kleṣāvaraṅga, nyon sgrub) and obstacles to knowledge (jñeyāvarana, shes sgrub). These critiques become contentious because upon close analysis it appears that the foundation of these critiques lies in attributing positions to Īantaraita which he never asserts and apparently even contradicts in his major philosophical treatises. As a part of this process of understanding these thinkers better on their own terms, I will evaluate the strength of those dGe-lugs-pa critiques in light of these claims made by Īantarakita in and his Madhyamakālaṅkāravṛtti and Tattvasaṃgraha as well as his disciple Kamalaśīla in, Madhyamakālaṅkārapañjikā, and Tattvasaṃgrahapañjikā in addition to considering the intellectual context in which

these thinkers were asserting their positions. The task of comparing what these Indian authors said concerning the issues of kleṣāvaraṅga and jñeyāvaraṅga with what the dGe-lugs commentators claim they said while pointing out the discrepancies and suggesting reasons for these discrepancies in light of considering their distinct intellectual milieu comprises the central focus of this paper.

James Kenneth Powell, University of Iowa
Vaatsyaayana's Commentary on the Nyaya sutra: A Defense of the Measures of Cognition (Pramāṇa) and its Buddhist Detractors

In this paper, I will examine the arguments the Nyaya school offers in defense of their doctrine of the existence of "measures" (pramāṇa) of cognition. Arguing that our really existent senses measure and ascertain the existence of real "things to be measured" (prameya), Vatsyaayana averts the criticism of opposing arguments from a variety of sources. Among other arguments, he calls to notice the Sanskrit language's many cases for noun stems, asking to what do the genitive, locative, etc. cases refer, if not to "real," essentially ascertainable, measurable entities? We will conclude with counter-statements by the Buddhist philosopher Nagarjuna. In doing so, I aim to lay bare the fundamental distinction between Buddhism and "Hinduism" via this analysis of the proper structure of arguments, and their disagreement about the ultimate reality of our acquisition of sense-data with regard to the "external world." I will demonstrate that fundamentally, the dispute between these philosophers can be reduced to more basic assertions of "atman" and "anatman" respectively.

THE PROBLEM OF NIHILISM IN MADHYAMAKA BUDDHIST PHILOSOPHY

Paul Donnelly, Northern Arizona University

"...Superficial - out of profundity": Re-evaluating the Question of Nihilism in Regard to Madhyamaka Philosophy

Both within the Buddhist tradition and among academics working on madhyamaka philosophy, the question of nihilism remains an important and contested issue. It is widely recognized that the anti-ontological position of the founders of madhyamaka carries with it the problem of grounding practice and ethics. Typically, this charge of nihilism is thought to undermine the place of madhyamaka within the broader context of ethics and the practice of Buddhism. The purpose of this paper is to approach this question from the perspective of some recent work on nihilism being conducted by Keith Ansell Pearson and others. Building on

the later work of Nietzsche, these thinkers suggest that the concept of nihilism can be "re-validated" into an affirming and creative starting point for thinking about human beings and society. Nihilism, then, is a necessary "tearing down" that opens the way for new thought and ways of being, and a return to the phenomenal world. This paper will apply the results of this recent work on Nietzsche to the understanding of Madhyamaka thinkers and will argue that the charge of nihilism need not necessarily be considered condemnatory.

Stephen Jenkins, Humboldt State University
Compassion and Ethical Nihilism: The Problem of the Ontological Referent of Compassion in Indian Buddhism

The originators of the doctrines of no-self and emptiness recognized and struggled with their apparent nihilistic implications. Not only did they have to avoid charges of nihilism, they had to support an ethic of universal compassion as well. According to the Perfection of Wisdom in Eight Thousand Lines, maintaining compassion for all sentient beings, when ultimately those beings do not exist, is the single most difficult thing for a bodhisattva. The purpose of this paper will be to present how Indian Buddhists directly treated this problem in their discussions of the ontological referent for compassion, which became a stock motif in abhidharma literature and was expanded and restylized by the Great Vehicle. The paper traces this motif as it was treated from four distinct Buddhist philosophical perspectives.

Edward Falls, University of Wisconsin - Madison
Nagarjuna's Arguments

An attempt is made, relying on analysis of Nagarjuna's arguments in his *Mulamadhyamakakarika* and *Vigrahavyavartani*, to locate his philosophical "project" on the spectrum of the contemporary realist/ anti-realist debate, with special attention to its connection with the specter of nihilism that appears (from the perspective of some) to hover near the anti-realist pole. I argue that Nagarjuna is not a global anti-realist; if he were, then his claim that emptiness does not entail nihilism would indeed be untenable, as some have argued it is. As his arguments make clear, he is an anti-realist just about (1) objects that have independent existence and (2) mental contents. As I read him, Nagarjuna's philosophical project turns out to be not dissimilar from Wittgenstein's therapeutic project, as scholars such as Thurman and Huntington have suggested. The *Mulamadhyamakakarika* is a therapeutic tool designed for the sake of Buddhist monk/philosophers immersed in the

Abhidharma schools, to help them attain release from the anguished perpetual grasping after views. But, as with Wittgenstein, Nagarjuna is, in the end, left with a view of sorts. For he is ontologically serious at least about entities that dependently arise, and this seriousness calls for a realism that would blanch global anti-realists.

NEPAL AD HOC PANEL

Steven Curtis, Cornell University
Sur Sudha's Nepal: State Radio, the World-Music Market, and the Continuity of Nation-Making

The music and marketing of Sur Sudha, the most internationally successful Nepali music group, is popular with both foreign and domestic audiences for its alleged ability to evoke a sense of "Nepaliness," or Nepalipan. These commercially galvanized notions of national character are significant, though, for their striking similarity to the musical models of Nepalipan that were developed in the 1950s as part of Radio Nepal's role in state-sponsored national unification efforts. Sur Sudha's mixtures of the "familiar and exotic," in the interest of attracting attention in the global tourism and world-music markets, directly recall Radio Nepal's combinations of the "new and old" as assertions of a cosmopolitan yet distinctly Nepali identity. While contact between groups is generally assumed to be an important factor in identity formation (Barth, 1969), it is commonly conceived in terms of interactions "on the ground" between neighboring groups. In examining instead the contact and competition that occurs within an international marketplace, this paper addresses the relationship between globally- and locally-held ideas of Nepalipan. It asks: how are global notions made comprehensible in local historic contexts? What are the implications of this popular, contemporary elaboration of the ideologies of Nepalipan traditionally associated with the Nepali state? Through comparisons of national identity as deployed in the global marketplace, as historically manifest by the state, and as variously conceived by Nepalis, the paper examines how conceptualizations of national character formed in the commercial music industry do in fact return to impact relations on the ground.

Carol Davis, Pomona College
Against Their Will: Nepal's Theatre of Girl-Trafficking

Against their will, girls and young women from rural Nepal are kidnapped, lured, sold, and married into prostitution. Transported to India and estranged from people and languages they understand, they are pressed into sex slavery

in the hellish brothels of Calcutta and Mumbai. The magnitude of Nepal's girl-trafficking problem is staggering and its ramifications are complex; annually, approximately five thousand Nepali girls are pressured into the business of sex. Nepali theater is throwing a spotlight onto the girl-trafficking crisis, and troupes of dedicated artist/activists are battling the problem using theatre as their only weapon. To raise awareness and mobilize policy makers, police, and general public toward the elimination of this problem, actors portray the causes and consequences of the girl-trafficking dilemma. Where rural literacy level is low, poverty rampant, electricity scarce, terrain arduous, and roads few, live, mobile, entertaining, and free theatre proves a powerful means of raising issues that have few alternative routes of discourse. In my presentation, I will describe this theatre aimed at essential social change, and I will analyze and visually illustrate the rough magic these artist/activists use to catch their audience unaware, and to question the culturally-determined system that permits the sale of women and girl children in Nepal.

Heather Hindman, University of Chicago

The Beachcombers of Kathmandu: Cultural Translation for Foreign Visitors to Nepal

This paper explores the mediation of Nepali culture for tourists, long-term visitors, and even for Nepalis themselves. Beachcomber is a moniker I take from the work of Greg Denning to reference the often unique and even marginal figures who are able to position themselves as both knowledgeable about and yet separate from the culture they teach to others. By exploring this interaction from a historical perspective, I hope to better illuminate how we came to the vision of Nepal that is prevalent today. Beginning with iconic figures in Nepal's history since the so-called opening of the country in 1950, such as Boris Lissanevitch and Erika Leuchtag, I move to the contemporary institutions and individuals who try to translate the complexity of Nepal's many languages, religions, and rituals into a palatable package. Moving beyond the previous work on Nepal in a foreign imaginary, I seek to position those able to make the translation. The beachcombers, of necessity, must be able to show they are fully part of Kathmandu culture and yet appear marketable to the West. With Nepal's brief but intense romance with the outside world, this has been and will continue to be a vital role.

Badri Nath Sharma, Tribhuvan University

A Sociological Study on Child Labor in Nepal (A Case Study of Domestic Child in Urban Terai of Eastern and Central Development Region)

Child labor is a serious problem in Nepal. The total number of working children is estimated about 4.52 million with annual growth rate of 18 percent. Research on domestic child labor in the Terai is extremely limited. The present study aims to find out the socio-economic status of domestic child labor in three municipalities located in the Terai of eastern and center development regions. Primary and secondary data sources have been extensively used. Data have been collected based on interviews and personal observations. Two case studies were also conducted. The children age group between 11-16 years and Tharu, Yadav, Mandal, and Brahmins ethnic groups occupied high proportion of domestic child labor. Ram Dayal Chaudhary and Bijaya Yadav are typical examples. Poor family economic condition has forced them to work as a servant in rich person's house. Both of them had strong desire to go to school and enjoy childhood. Few employers sent servants to school and permitted them to work in morning and evening hour. Providing employment opportunities to senior family members of resource poor families may reduce tendency to be child labor.

INDIVIDUAL PAPERS IN SESSIONS NOT DEVOTED TO HIMALAYAN REGIONS

Mary Cameron, Florida Atlantic University

Imagining Healing Landscapes in Ayurvedic Medicine

Ayurvedic medicine has historically drawn its images from a cultivated agrarian and uncultivated jungle to further its theories of illness cause, progression, prognosis and cure. The living organism, constituted by the three dosa, interacts with its life environment, constituted by five elements, six flavors, and six seasons. The dynamic state of congruence suggests a state of health derived from a rural rather than an urban environment. Current efforts to professionalize ayurvedic medicine in Nepal constitute urban and rural places in ways that replicate and refashion a polarized landscape of healing. The rural is positioned as an original source of dietary-based humoral balance and medicinal plants, relative to other materialistic, polluted, and hence imbalanced urban places. Yet contradicting such pastoral visions are the ayurvedic authorities who are presently drafting professional statutes, all of whom are from Kathmandu and educated in India urban centers. While simultaneously extolling the virtues of the rural village and the purity of its plants, these urbanites nonetheless may potentially place arbitrary limits on village healers' rights to practice medicine, healers they presume to be male. Other producers of the imagined rural include a major Indian ayurvedic pharmaceutical company which has relocated its experimental facility from the city to an expansive rice field outside of Kathmandu University

Kim Gutschow, Brandeis University
Betwixt and Between Asceticism and Domesticity: Buddhist Nuns in Kashmir

This paper explores the liminal status of nuns in relation to the realm of renunciation and domesticity. It begins by noting the misrecognition and elision of Tibetan Buddhist nuns in Kashmir from scholarly and literary sources due to their ambiguous relationship with the domestic realm. While the apprenticeship, ordination, and later institutional affiliation of Buddhist nuns establish their ritual and social status in the community, these stages also reinforce their ties to that community. We will examine how nuns, unlike monks, remain bound to their families and to the domestic realm despite their ritual passage as novice nuns and later full members of a monastic community. The progression of nuns through ritual stages aims to move nuns from the mundane to the monastic realm, even as village economics and local mores bind nuns ever more closely to domestic obligations. In the end, nuns must be both dutiful daughters and compassionate celibates.

Reeta Chowdhury-Tremblay, University of Carlton
Kashmir Politics and Militancy: One Step Forward Two Steps Back

This paper reviews the impact of the secessionist/nationalist movement and the accompanied militancy on Kashmir politics. What emerges as the discussion's central theme is that although democracy has been formally operational in the state during the past five decades, it is a democracy that has been neither effective nor substantive. Indeed, the Valley lacks both a robust civil society and a capable state, the former choked off early on by the restricted public space to which dissidents of state policy have been confined, and the latter circumscribed by its own patronage politics. In fact, because the power of the Indian army and the Islamic jihad militants has become effectively institutionalized, the already anemic civil society in the Valley has been further debilitated. And the task of the Indian state has become even more difficult. Whereas in the pre-insurgency period its challenge was to foster a deeper, more substantive democratization of the state, particularly in the Valley, it must now attend as well to the procedural and formal aspects of electoral democracy which had once seemed assured.

Michael Witzel, Harvard University
A Localized View of South Asia: The Nagas of Kashmir

The cult of the Nagas is typical for Kashmir, and was so even for Muslims. Many of the Sanskrit Naga names go

back even further, to a pre-Indo-Aryan substratum. Among all Indian texts, the local Nilamata Purana contains the longest list of Nagas, some 600, which often can be localized at particular points in the Valley and its surroundings. A closer study of these names reveals that they are arranged in a particular fashion, starting with the most important one, Nila, at Vernag, in the southeast of the Valley. They represent a view of the world centered on the Kashmir Valley.

Rashmi Bali Chilka, Independent Scholar
The Gift of Janjati: The Fashioning of a Tribal Identity

In 1967, the state of Uttar Pradesh recognized the whole of Jaunsar Bawar as a tribal area despite the recommendation of a Parliamentary Committee on Scheduled Tribes (1965) against such a designation. The Jaunsari upper castes, who had argued for equality of social status with Brahmins and Rajputs of the plains until the 1950s, gradually shifted to accepting and advocating a tribal identity for themselves. I will explore how this fashioning of a tribal identity really reveals the attempts of Jaunsari upper castes to maintain or retain a privileged position in the post-colonial state. I will argue that the designation of "scheduled tribe" was an important victory for the upper castes in the struggle over land rights with the lower castes in the region. "Tribal" thus becomes a vehicle for the upper castes to retain their privileges when a marginalized region gets incorporated into the larger nation and becomes subject to nationalist ideology. The tribal identity, however, is fraught with tensions for the upper castes as they try to retain the economic privileges it bestows with their fight for social equality with the larger nation. Central to this whole problem is the prevalence of fraternal polyandry that was pivotal in establishing a tribal identity for the Jaunsaris. While allowing them to articulate a separate identity it fosters a sense of inferiority amongst them. The whole idea of polyandry works against the larger national ideology privileging monogamous relations and has been used to portray Jaunsaris as a society with "loose morals". This has then led to extreme sensitivity on the woman's question and has eroded some of the freedom enjoyed by Jaunsari women in terms of sexuality and divorce. This paper, then, highlights the problem of the tribal identity, both in terms of its application and its differential impact within the society that has been labeled with the designation.