



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

Volume 15  
Number 2 *Himalayan Research Bulletin*

Article 17

1995

## Conference Digest and Abstracts

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

### Recommended Citation

. 1995. Conference Digest and Abstracts. *HIMALAYA* 15(2).

Available at: <https://digitalcommons.macalester.edu/himalaya/vol15/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](mailto:scholarpub@macalester.edu).



# Conference Digest

Please address your questions and information about meetings of interest to the Nepal Studies Association's Conference Coordinators:

Mary Cameron, Department of Sociology and Anthropology, Auburn University, Auburn AL 36849-5209  
cammer@ducvax.auburn.edu

John Metz, Department of History and Geography, Northern Kentucky University, Highland Heights, KY 41099; e-mail metz@nku.edu;

## ANNUAL CONFERENCES CALENDAR

CONFERENCE	APPROXIMATE DATES	ABSTRACT DEADLINE
American Academy of Religion	Weekend before Thanksgiving	1 March
American Anthropological Association	Early December	1 April
Association of American Geographers	Early April	1 September
Association for Asian Studies	Early April	1 August
South Asian Conference	3rd Weekend October	15 May

*We ask scholars who wish to present papers or organize panels for conferences to notify HRB sufficiently early to allow us to include your plans in the HRB.*

---

### Conference Paper Abstracts

---

#### Abstracts for the 24th Annual Conference on South Asia

Arun Agarwal  
*University of Florida*

**Small is Beautiful, but is Larger Better?  
Forest Management Institutions in  
Kumaon Himalayas, India**

The paper examines the Van Panchayats in two Kumaon districts--Almora and Pithoragarh--in an attempt to tease out two sets of relationships. At the micro level it seeks to investigate the impact of institutional arrangements on resource management. In the process it advances the argument that successful

collective action to conserve resources is not related to group size in any direct or straightforward manner. In so doing, it goes against a significant orthodoxy in the collective action literature that views the chances of successful collective action to increase as group size declines. At the macro level, the paper explicates the relationship between the changing political context and responses villagers offer to these altered circumstances. The main thrust of this part of the paper is that villagers are not passive victims of a predatory state, but that they use new laws as fulcra to leverage ongoing local struggles over access to forest resources. The twin arguments advanced in the paper use general theoretical frameworks to focus attention towards the specificities of local conditions in determining resource use patterns.

Ravina Aggarwal  
*Smith College*

### **Selling Stories: Fieldwork, Friendship and Fiction in the Bazaars of Ladakh**

This paper is based on the controversies that arose during the course of compiling life histories of market women (jokers, storytellers, "antique" sellers) in the main bazaar of Leh, the capital of the Himalayan district of Ladakh in North India. By composing short stories that blur the boundaries between the genres of ethnography and fiction, myth and history, local places and transnational identities, I had hoped to construct a counter-narrative to the documented colonial and post-colonial histories of the marketplace that have largely tended to dwell on the feats of male traders selling wool, silk, salt and tea. In the process of attempting to "recover" a female presence from scattered memories, orally transmitted, and selecting experimental textual strategies through which these lives could be represented, I found that I had to question not only the limits of ethnographic writing and the problems of fiction and concealment, but also to examine critically the ways in which these modes of knowledge are situated, constituted and applied.

Laura Ahern  
*University of Michigan - Ann Arbor*

### **I'm Offering You an Invitation to Love**

Through a close analysis of 110 love letters I propose to explore in my paper the issues surrounding incipient literacy and social change among Magars in the Nepali village of Junigau. Building on the work of practice theorists, feminist scholars, and cultural Marxists, I intend to focus on the intersections between the microprocesses of interaction in Junigau and global processes of transformation. This paper not only analyses the linguistic form and content of the love letters but also situates Junigau's new epistolary genre within the concrete social contexts in which villagers read and write these letters that have so quickly become central to their changing practices of courtship and marriage.

Mark Baker  
*University of California - Berkeley*

### **Change within the Communal Irrigation Systems (*Khuls*) of Kangra Valley, H.P., India**

This paper examines and seeks to explain institutional change within the *khuls* of Kangra Valley, in District Kangra, Himachal Pradesh. Relatively recent transformations in the regional political economy, especially a rapid expansion of the nonfarm employment sector, have challenged the ability of *kuhl* regimes to maintain the necessary levels of collective action required for the repair, maintenance and management of *kuhl* irrigation systems. The magnitude and nature of the impacts of this contextual change vary among *khuls* according to their social and ecological characteristics. *Kuhl* regime responses to these impacts range from little to no change to total collapse and subsequent takeover by the Himachal Pradesh Department of Irrigation and Public Health. *Kuhl* regimes in the mid range of this spectrum have managed to maintain adequate levels of collective action by instigating a wide range of institutional changes including, for example, the formalization of *kuhl* management through the creation of *kuhl* committees and the establishment of new rules governing labor mobilization. I argue that the constellation of social and ecological traits which characterize each *kuhl* regime account for the resulting pattern of diverse institutional arrangements and the diverse mixes of state and local authority now present in the *khuls* of Kangra Valley.

Ann Dennis and Barbara Brower  
*USDA Forest Service; Portland State University*

### **Forest Reproduction in Subalpine Forests of Khumbu**

A small-scale study of forest dynamics in Sagarmatha National Park (SNP) documents active regeneration in forest plots near Sherpa villages. In 1990 Dennis analyzed small stands of mixed *Abies spectabilis* woodland in SNP. These plots, located near villages and subject to livestock browsing, limited fuel gathering, and litter collection, have been widely represented as declining remnants of retreating native forest. But previous reports, based on a range of sources including travelers' and foresters' intuition, local oral history, selective forest sampling, repeat photography, and GIS analysis, are contradicted by the results of this study. We argue that the risks of generalization, the reliance on limited sources, and the privileging of a single perspective can lead to erroneous conclusions about the functioning of wildland resources which are subject to complex and changing uses. We suggest that multifaceted, complementary strategies of analysis will produce a more balanced and accurate perspective.

Jose Cabezon  
*Hiff School of Theology*

### **The Tibetan Colophon**

Focusing on Tibetan Madhyamaka literature of the fourteenth through sixteenth centuries, this paper examines the phenomenon of the colophon as a literary artifact. It suggests that the study of colophons allow us to construct a sociology of literary production. In addition, the paper attempts a tentative structuralist stylistics of the colophon that, though based on a specific genre of literature from a specific historical period, may be applicable in wider historical settings and to other genres of the Tibetan textual tradition.

Mary Cameron  
*Auburn University*

### **Untouchable Laborers: Embodiment and Aesthetics of Low Caste Artisan Production in Western Nepal**

Because of Nepalese farmers' dependence on well-crafted iron tools of many kinds, low-caste ironsmiths (luhar, kaami) maintain extensive patron-client (riti-bhagya, jajmani) ties, and, of all the artisan jaat, are the best "paid" and least threatened by market forces. In this video-assisted presentation of luhar forging new tools and repairing old ones in an outdoor smithy in western Nepal, I draw on the concepts of 'embodied knowledge' (culture contained within the experiencing body) and its aesthetics to comment on the social dimensions of ironsmithing. These include social relationships of kin, friends, and patronage, independence and cooperation of manufacturing, and apprenticeship. The luhar's head, eyes, arms, hands, legs and feet engage, and are engaged in, the firing and tedious pounding of rough iron blades, the whittling of wooden handles, the coiling of metal into chains, and repairing the hearth's "moluth". Though they continuously encounter danger and pain, the luhar avoids expressing fatigue and—choosing instead to joke, talk, and smoke tobacco with family and friends.

Piya Chatterjee  
*University of California - Riverside*

### **The Privilege of Weeping: Plantation Politics, Exile and Poesis in the "Field" Encounter**

This paper, written as short story and poem, will explore the contradictions within a "native" encounter with a "field" site both home and not-home, the plantation country of North Bengal. Using Chandra Mohanty's assertions about the politics of experience as a point of departure, this paper will suggest that a gendered language imbued by anger and embodiment, elided from most objectivist anthropological presentations, can re-configure in powerful ways the borders between "fiction" and ethnographic writing. However, it will also argue that a fashionable obeisance

to "fragmentary knowledge" is inadequate IF the "native" woman anthropologist seeks to speak a poesis of practice, sketch the potential of a coalitional and praxiological kind of writing. In short, a poetic foregrounding of the politics of "field" research does not only challenge scientific representations of that "field", it can also pose important questions about the connection between writing and engagement; the inextricable mesh of words within worlds and the creative realpolitik entailed therein.

Mary Des Chene  
*Bryn Mawr College*

### **Colonial Classification: Martial Race Handbooks as Ethnological Projects**

Commentators have vacillated between labeling the British colonial classification of martial prowess a full-blown ideology or, more humbly, an idea. Variation in British usage is one reason for this unsettled historical evaluation. "Race", "Caste", and "Class" were variously appended to "Martial". A mixture of ethnic and caste designations, regions, and religions characterizes martial labels: Pathans, Rajputs, Sikhs, "Hindustani Mussalmans". This varied terminology points to the complex accretions that produced ideas of martiality in colonial India. From the late Nineteenth century a series of commissioned martial race handbooks codified received wisdom. Most authors were serving officers, trained at an English public school and Sandhurst - not at Cambridge or Oxford. Not necessarily well-read in the racial theories of their day, many were nonetheless knowledgeable about district officers reports, the ethnographic survey, and other ongoing classificatory projects.

I undertake a comparative analysis of the handbooks on different martial races in order to assess the influence of contemporary ethnological theories of race and caste on the development of the martial race "idea". The combination of colonial classifications and military experience that informed the handbooks show them to have been part of the sustained ethnological project that underwrote colonial rule.

Keila Diehl  
*University of Texas - Austin*

### **Why Some Tibetan Babies Change Sex After Birth: Popular, Religious and Medical Explanations in Exile**

In this paper, I will discuss the widespread Tibetan belief that babies can (and, most Tibetans maintain, sometimes do) change their sex after birth. Conversations on this topic with lay refugees and monks in Tibetan communities in northern India and with Tibetan and Western doctors and nurses, supplemented by readings in Tibetan medical journals and dharma texts concerned with the intermediate state between life and death (Bardo) and re-birth, have revealed this subject to be a fascinating and complicated entry

point for a discussion of a wide spectrum of salient issues, including: the generally denied Tibetan preference for boy children, the self-perception of Tibetan women, discrepancies between "folk beliefs" and "doctrinal explanations" concerning gender acquisition, and broader Tibetan conceptions of sexuality (hermaphrodites particularly). In addition, I discuss new implications of this old phenomenon in exile and in Tibet, including the use and abuse of the ability of Tibetan doctors to "make" boy babies by both Indian and Chinese families. And, briefly, I suggest possible links between this local explanation for and social accommodation of this phenomenon and current Western medical and academic interest in "intersexed babies."

My research for this presentation has been broad-based, combining oral testimonies from those who have "seen it with their own eyes" or were one of these babies themselves, those who have never seen it but believe it, medical explanations (Tibetan and Western), and formal Buddhist perspectives. I am less interested in the "truth value" of this belief than in understanding why people believe it, how they articulate their understanding of sex-changing, and what can be learned from all of this about Tibetan conceptualizations of gender and sexuality (in both physical and social terms).

David Edds  
*Emporia State University*

### **Fish Ecology in Nepal's Gandaki River Basin**

I investigated the environmental correlates of fish community structure in Nepal's Kali Gandaki/Narayani River from March, 1984 to May 1986. Spatial and temporal patterns of assemblage composition were documented by making 172 samples at 85 sites from headwaters, north of the Himalaya crestline, to the lowlands of the subtropical Tarai, including 14 sites sampled in each season. I collected a total of 120 species, of which approximately 50% were cypriniforms (minnows and carps) and 25% were siluriforms (catfishes). The number of species per sampling site varied from 0 to 66, increasing from the headwaters to lowlands as a result of additions and replacements. Gradient analysis indicated factors of geography (e.g. stream gradient, altitude), water chemistry (hardness, alkalinity), and stream hydraulics (current speed, substrate type) were the main abiotic variables-associated with fish community structure in this extreme environment. Seasonal changes had substantial but secondary effects. Rivers are critical to the lives of Nepalese. Nevertheless, negative human impacts on this Himalayan aquatic ecosystem are considerable, including industrial pollution, dynamiting rivers to capture fishes, and construction of water diversions/dams that block fish spawning migrations.

Jana Fortier  
*University of Wisconsin - Madison*

### **Simple Labor Reciprocity Ain't So Simple**

One work strategy which is essential to labor intensive wet rice fanning is known as *parima*, or simple labor reciprocity (SLR). Although of ten mentioned by anthropologists, SLR is seldom analyzed as an important labor practice. Most analytical attention focuses on farmer transitions to wage labor. I maintain that Western theoretical strategies marginalize and essentialize non-Western economic features rather than elaborating socio-economic behavior into more fluid interactive paradigms. Further, theoretical marginalization of nonwaged work strategies is influenced by androcentric research biases. Since women's work strategies are only beginning to become an object of scientific interest, many informal nonwaged work strategies are poorly understood.

Related to the general mystification of *this* form of exchange, researchers frequently equate simple labor reciprocity with equal exchange. Anthropologists even advocate SLR as an egalitarian countermeasure to exploitative wage labor. Assumptions of SLR as socially symmetrical incorrectly situate reciprocity in an evolutionary framework which idealizes reciprocity as a previous form of exchange more symbolically "pure" than market-driven capitalist economies. Using video stills from Himalayan fieldwork, I show that SLR is only one facet of a greater set of work strategies which are frequently asymmetrical.

Robert Goldman  
*University of California - Berkeley*

### **South Asian Studies in the Twenty First Century: By Whom? For Whom? What for?**

South Asia Studies in America like may Area Studies, is a creature and a contemporary of the post-colonial era and in some ways an element of the world of the Cold War. As it, and we, its practitioners, confront a rapidly globalizing post-diasporic world characterized by significant demographic change in our student population, great growth in the community of South Asians in America, the downsizing of the Academy, and the decline of governmental inputs into education and research, it is essential that we look at what it is we are doing and how these shifts can and should impact it.

In this context the present paper will raise and examine questions as to what it is we do and for whom we do it. Is South Asian Studies the study of knowledge produced in South Asia or by South Asians wherever they may be? Is there a difference between Area Studies and Ethnic Studies? What should be the role of changing student constituencies and concerned ethnic communities in determining the future of the field?

Arjun Guneratne  
*Macalester College*

**Language, the Census, and the  
Vicissitudes of the Tharu Identity in  
Nepal**

During the last few decades, various Tarai populations collectively subsumed under the ethnonym "Tharu", have been forging a common ethnic identity in opposition to that of the high caste Nepalese who have immigrated into and settled the Tarai. As a central element in this process, the Tharu elite has defined language as an essential aspect of Tharu identity. However, the languages that Tharus speak vary from region to region; in some areas, "Tharu" is indistinguishable from local regional languages such as Maithili and Bhojpuri. Because the Nepali state enumerates its people on linguistic rather than ethnic categories, many Tharus are enumerated as being speakers of these languages. While there is no Maithili or Bhojpuri ethnicity as such, there is a strong, politically important "Tarai" identity, generally associated with speakers of Indian languages, who are the descendants of recent Indian immigrants into the Tarai. The census therefore is the principal locus of contestation between the proponents of a Tarai identity and the Tharu elite. This paper discusses two important aspects of this contestation: the question of how the Tharu language itself is to be defined, and a Tharu critique of the census.

Shubhra Gururani  
*Syracuse University*

**Ecofeminism and the Essential Woman:  
Women and Nature in the Environment  
Debate in India**

Contemporary environmental discourse privileges local, feminine, and traditional ways of knowing and knowledge production over global, masculine, and modern. Although, it is true that the focus on local/feminine/tradition allows us to explore different sites of resistance and possible alternatives, such claims have valorized the local/feminine modes of survival as a panacea for a sustainable future. This uncritical acceptance of local/feminine as superior forms of knowing and acting has not only sharpened the dualism which informs it, it has also obscured the multiple ways through which local is constituted and ignored the fact that local is not independent of other locales.

This paper in-an attempt to explore the limitations of the focus on local/feminine critically examines the blind acceptance of a spiritual communion between women and nature in the ecofeminist discourse. It is my contention that the valorization of women as traditional environmentalists tends to view women as forbearers of tradition and embodiments of our lost past. Women, thus become the symbol of local, tradition, harmony, and past against men who represent global, modernity,

competition, and present. Women, in this logic of argument are reinforced to their traditional roles as caretakers and increasingly represented in the ecofeminist discourse as nurturers, managers and harmless. By taking examples from a Central Himalayan village which contradict such representations, the paper argues for a revision of the environmentalist discourse beyond essentialization and an acknowledgment of women as active agents in processes of democracy and social justice.

Chad Haines  
*University of Wisconsin-Madison*

**Etching the State Upon the Landscape:  
Routes and the Frontierization of the  
Gilgit Region**

This paper is a historical study of the colonial encounter in the region today known as the Northern Areas of Pakistan. With the establishment of the Gilgit Agency in the 1870s, the region was subject to a variety of changes in its social and economic relations. Of particular historical importance is the transformation of the geo-economic links of the region. This transformation can be defined as one from a 'closed' region to a 'transit' region.

By 'closed' we do not mean 'isolated', the region of Hunza was firmly oriented northward to the Chinese outpost of Yarkand, with grazing pasturage in the Turkistan Pamirs. As well, there was much mobility of people to and from Chitral, to the west of the region, bordering Afghanistan. The flow of people and goods in such a system is a closed loop between two termini. There is none, or very little, integration between various loops. The exchange of tributary goods of the Mirs of Hunza had no connection with the flow of people to and from Chitral, which had no connection with the mobility of the Wakhi settled in the region and their trade in sheep and yaks with Kyrgyz nomads.

However, through the construction of routes into and traversing the region these various closed loops became integrated and additional linkages were forged. The integration of these traditional patterns of mobility under state control and the attempt to forge trade relations between Chinese Turkistan and British India via Gilgit intensified the fluidity of the region. Established local families were now seeking education for their children in Srinagar; supplies were being brought from the southern cities of Abbottabad, Rawalpindi, and Peshawar; members of the Gilgit Scouts were stationed at the British Council in Kashgar; and Pukhtuns migrated to the region to capitalize on the trade flowing between Kashgar and Amritsar in the British Punjab.

The integration of the Gilgit region into the British colonial state did not close it off, but rather opened it up. Route construction and the administrative control of mobility, firmly situated the region at the frontier of the

British Empire. This paper argues that, while the mapping of borders at the edges of states was significant, it is also important to understand the changes in flows and mobilities brought about by the infrastructural expansion of colonial states. The rise of the modern state lies in its integrative links as much as in the fixing of its territorial expanse. Thus, the modern state can be said to be etched upon the landscape by the routes it constructs.

Research for this paper was undertaken at various archives in Pakistan and India, and through fieldwork in the Northern Areas, Pakistan, during the 1994-95 academic year, under the auspices of an International Predissertation Fellowship from the Social Science Research Council.

Heather Hindman  
*University of Chicago*

### **Authenticity and Authority in the Imagination of the Buddha's Birthplace**

Buddhism has long had a difficult relationship with the land in which it originally was spread. This conflict gains particular importance in the Hindu nation of Nepal where many believe that Gautama Buddha was born. Just inside the current borders of the nation of Nepal, Lumbini, once called Rumini-dev, is thought to be the location of the garden where Queen Maya gave birth to the Buddha of the current era.

Yet, such a claim is difficult to prove. Following upon the writings of Maurice Halbwachs about the Judeo-Christian Holy Land, I explore how scholars both inside Nepal and from outside make claims about what happened in this land thousands of years ago. Paying special attention to what types of information are seen as authentic and whose statements are given priority, I examine the means that are used to establish the location of the Buddha's birth. This is particularly interesting in light of the ambivalent attitude which the Nepalese government has towards locating the birth site within the Nepal borders, and the quest as to the role Lumbini should play in Nepalese identity. Having such an important world religious site within Nepal could be managed to produce a great deal of revenue for Nepal, and the desires of recent government to maintain its identity as a specifically Hindu state. All of these factors work to affect how the Nepalese government and other parties make claims about the location where Siddhartha allegedly took his first, lotus producing steps.

Laura Kunreuther  
*University of Michigan*

### **Married to "Dukha"**

"If I had known about the nunnery before I got married," a middle-aged Newari woman confided, "Then perhaps I wouldn't have married." With this statement ama began a long narrative about marriage, motherhood,

and religion in Newar society. Drawing on the work of Goffman and Bakhtin, I argue that Ama invokes several distinct and conflicting ideological views of marriage circulating among Newars. To teach me about *dukha*, a sentiment of suffering attributed especially to married women, Ama describes the reoccurring hardships a wife confronts throughout her life. This lesson was not only for me. Next to us sat Ama's adolescent daughter who interpreted and actively, if relatively silently, participated in our talk. By tracing what Goffman calls "participation frameworks," it becomes clear that ama uses her formulaic portrait of *dukha* to teach her daughter a normative view of marriage. Simultaneously, she tacitly challenges the dominant account, by referring to the recent Theravada movement popular among Buddhist Newars. Ama's narrative suggests diverse meanings of *dukha* that illuminate ideological and religious changes occurring in the Kathmandu Valley, which have profoundly affected Newars, in particular, married Newar women.

Hyun-soon Lee  
*University of Wisconsin-Madison*

### **Omnibus Issues in Buddhism**

Study of *gotra* would be indispensable to the study of *tathagatagarbha*, because *gotra* is a synonym of *tathagatagarbha*, representing a different historical development. In Tibetan Buddhism, however, two important interpretations of *gotra* have been neither examined nor translated in any Western language, viz. *Tsong kha pa's* and *Dol po pa's* interpretations. Their interpretations, as they have emerged in their commentaries on the *Abhisamayalamkara*, are particularly important, as far as the *rang stong* and *gzhan stong* debate regarding *tathagatagarbha* is concerned.

First, we will examine their different interpretations on *gotra*. Next, we will analyze how their interpretations function within their different interpretations of *tathagatagarbha*.

Mark Liechty  
*University of California-Santa Barbara*

### **Inside/Outside: Middle-Class Identity and Public Space in Kathmandu**

One interesting feature of middle-class discourse in Kathmandu is the distinction between "inside" and "outside" the home (*ghar bhitra/ghar bahira*). Drawing on recent research I suggest that the distinction, though long in-the-making, is one in which the "outside" or public space is increasingly constructed/imagined through consumer practice, e.g., "fashion." More and more "outside" or public areas become spaces of "doing fashion." As public spaces become increasingly commercialized, so also do public identities. Tracing earlier and related manifestations in 19th century Rana architecture and elite cultural practice, I suggest that new understandings of public space or publicness are

slowly taking shape in the city alongside other earlier--and still relevant--epistemic spaces and ways of being. Finally, I propose that the construction of this new public space--and the appropriation of public practice--is tied to the larger middle-class project of claiming, privileging, and naturalizing its own class interests.

John Makransky  
*Boston College*

### **Selected Problems in Doctrines and Praxis of Mahayana Buddhahood**

The focus of this paper is the correlation between certain forms of meditation praxis and particular doctrines of buddhahood. The paper centers on the doctrine of *svabhavikakaya-dharmakaya*: buddhahood as buddhas experience it directly in their own innermost realization. It will survey a few key passages in texts traditionally associated with Maitreya, Asanga, or Vasubandhu: *Mahayanasutralamkara*, *Trimsika*, *Trisvabhavanirdesa*, and *Dharmadharmatavibhaga*. The thesis is that, when the overall pattern of buddhahood in these texts is discerned from amongst the host of inter-related technical terms, *svabhavikakaya* represents a direct extrapolation of a specific four staged meditational practice to its projected conclusion. As such, *svabhavikakaya* has not been primarily a theoretical or speculative construct, but more properly a code word for what is heralded by a phenomenological experience that emerges from specific methods of meditation. It was understood that, with further incremental development, that yogic experience opens into the unlimited, incomprehensible vastness of buddhahood, like the sky. A related four stage meditation procedure is central to later Indian Yogacara and Yogacara-Madhyamaka writers such as Dignaga, Kamalasila and Ratnakarasanti, who conditioned later developments in Tibet. In Tibet, these yogic stages were retained as modes of preparation for or entry into the direct realization of the nature of mind (*sems nyid*), at the heart of Mahamudra practice. This is expressed in writings of sGam-po-pa and the Third Karmapa Rang-byung rdo-rje. While the Mahasiddhas of late Indian Buddhism were the primary forerunners of Tibetan Mahamudra practice, the fuller context for entry into that practice in Tibet also retains the four yogic stages of the texts of Maitreya, Asanga, and Vasubandhu as mediated Yogacara-Madhyamaka. Because of the vivid immediacy of Mahamudra thought/practice, there is an even more direct relation of meditational praxis to doctrines of buddhahood in Tibet.

Ken McDonald  
*University of Toronto*

### **Labour Arrangements and Household Security in Northern Pakistan**

In the 'outpost' villages of the Baltistan region of the Karakoram Himalaya, communities have developed specific agro-ecological and social practices to reduce the vulnerability posed by natural and economic hazards.

The capacity to provide security to individual members resides, partially, in the diversity of cooperative and reciprocal labour arrangements extant in the village. The effectiveness of these labour arrangements in reducing vulnerability, however, is dependant upon the legitimate authority of the household head and his female equivalent to allocate labour responsibilities. It is also influenced by certain community wide metanorms that establish a reciprocal nexus between household and village security. In this paper I use examples from a Balti village to demonstrate the relationships between labour allocation and vulnerability, the role played by 'traditional' institutions of authority in allocating labour both at the level of the household and the village, and threats to household security posed by recent changes in village social structure.

John Metz  
*Northern Kentucky University*

### **Species Composition and Dynamics of Temperate and Subalpine Forests of West Central Nepal**

Indirect Gradient Analysis of 77 0.1ha stands of forest on the southeastern flank of Dhaulagiri Himal between 2000 and 3600 m groups the vegetation into 7 types: (1) south-facing woodlands dominated by *Quercus lanata*, *Lyonia ovalifolia*, and *Rhododendron arboreum* between 2000 and 2600 m; (2) diverse, mesic stands between 2300 and 2600 m on westerly and northwesterly sites, with *Symplocos ramocissima*, *Quercus glauca*, and *Persea duthiei* constituting 62% of stand importance; (3) south facing sites between 2400 and 2800 m with *Rhododendron arboreum* and *Quercus semicarpifolia* contributing 57% of importance and no other species exceeding 9%; (4) highly diverse forests on northwest facing sites between 2400 and 2800 m with *Rhododendron arboreum*, *Acer campbellii*, *Ilex dyphrena*, and *Symplocos ramocissima* equaling 52% of stand importance; (5) *Abies spectabilis*, *Rhododendron barbatum*, and *Tsuqa dumosa* dominated stands on west, northwest, and north facing sites between 2900 and 3300 m; (6) *A. spectabilis* and *R. arboreum* dominated stands on south facing sites between 3100 and 3600 m; and (7) *Betula utilis*, *R. campanulatum*, and *Sorbus microphylla* stands on west to northerly sites between 3300 and 3600 m. In all of these forests, canopy trees (except *Symplocos ramocissima*) are not producing sufficient saplings and seedlings to sustain their populations.

Margaret Mills  
*University of Pennsylvania*

### **Vertical, Lateral, Secular and Sacral: Hindukush Houses in Conception and Use**

Very little is on flat ground in the Hindukush. The traditional house form in use among Muslims of various ethnic groups, particularly Kho and Hunzakut,



arranges interior space in both vertical and lateral dimensions, assigning spaces for men and women, work and leisure, secular and ritual/religious purposes. Seasonally, the pillars of the house and its various walls are marked with religious inscriptions which mark the religious year, the agricultural sequence, and the varying degrees of sacrality of different zones of the single-room dwelling space. The house's physical design and building techniques make it well suited to earthquake-resistance, but additionally, in architecture and daily use patterns, the house is organized and decorated to accommodate and articulate sacred and everyday use and access. In keeping with the consistently gendered division of labor in the region, the single domestic space is also organized in terms of gender and seniority of family members. This paper will provide a guided slide-tour of the so called Chitrali house, as a technical and conceptual structure suited for multiple use, expressive of family structure and religious ideology, and conceptually integrated with certain other general notions of space and sacrality pertaining to large patterns of land use.

Gopal Singh Nepali  
*Tribhuvan University*

### **Tribe, Caste and National Integration in Nepal**

This paper proposes to discuss the diversity of race, culture and language in Nepal and the ideological conflict existing in between them. It also discusses the mechanism by which they were brought together into a single territorial state and how, through a state regulated system an attempt was made to homogenize them into a single nation based on the supremacy of Parbatiya values of Hinduism, caste, Nepali language and Parbatiya king.

Subsequently the paper discusses how, after the return of democracy, the Parbatiya culture as a reference model for national integration has become obsolete, since most of the Tibet-Burman tribes and the low caste groups have begun to assert themselves against domination by the Parbatiya high castes.

Finally, the paper points out the need for an alternative model of integration which should be based on recognition of cultural pluralism, development of all-Nepal value system that adequately reflects the sentiments of the various ethnic groups, greater involvement of the non-Parbatiya groups in the functioning of democracy and the institution of constitutional monarchy as the rallying point to unite the people cutting across all divisive groups.

David Pinault  
*Loyola University*

### **Community and Muharram Observances in Darjeeling**

This paper examines an Indian Shi'a Muslim minority community in its relations with a neighboring population of Hindus, Buddhists, and Sunni Muslims. I propose to look at the ways in which the public celebration of Muharram (the season in which Shi'a Muslims annually lament the death of the Imam Husain in the seventh-century battle of Karbala) serves to strengthen Islamic identity in the setting of Darjeeling. Drawing on personal interviews and observations made in 1991 and again in 1995, I will describe the following three aspects of the lamentation-liturgies: preparations for the Muharram season; the public processions of Shi'a mourners through the streets of Darjeeling; dramatic re-enactments of the battle of Karbala, held on Ashura (the Tenth of Muharram, the day of Husain's death). I will conclude with comments on the relation between religious commemorative ritual and the maintenance of communal identity.

Katharine N. Rankin  
*Cornell University*

### **They were our Servants: 'Small Caste' Perspectives on jati in Newar Society**

Based on fieldwork in the Newar town of Sankhu, this paper considers the caste system from several, 'small caste' vantage points. Origin myths of the meat cutter, or Nay caste, for instance, overtly challenge the Dumontian, brahmanical view of caste as a social hierarchy based on pure/impure distinctions. Research on networks of patronage among the castes in Sankhu suggests that, while an *idea* of hierarchy may prevail, the caste *statuses* of an individual vary in different, contexts and from different perspectives. Finally the paper considers why low castes in Sankhu resist or have abandoned altogether their economic and ritual relationships with their jajman, but both continue their ritual work vis a vis the kingdom, or *desh*, and continue to expect the services of their own patrons.

Vasant Saberwal  
*Yale University*

### **Access to Grazing Resources among the Gaddi of Himachal Pradesh, India**

Pastoral communities world wide have become increasingly marginalized as a result of government policies that have restricted herder access to traditional grazing areas. In addition policy induced changes in herder land use practices have resulted in large scale land degradation. In contrast, the Gaddi of Himachal Pradesh, northern India continue to herd profitably, despite a century old effort on the part of the forest department to restrict Gaddi use of grazing lands. Through archival research, an examination of current official documents and open-ended interviews, I examine the means used by the Gaddi to circumvent forest department policies. The use of political influence to undermine bureaucratic policy implementation and the development of a flexible property system that enables herders to

accommodate one another at times of forage scarcity appear to be two key factors that have enabled the Gaddi to sustain a successful herding tradition. Whether or not Gaddi herding contributes to land degradation is unclear. However, a clear implication of these results is that the forest department appears to be bypassed in the decision making with regard to management of Himachal's forests and grasslands. More inclusive policies, that are more cognizant of the Gaddi's lifestyle, may ensure more effective conservation in Himachal Pradesh.

Pratima Shrestha  
*New Mexico State University*

### **Population and Habitat of the Saurus Crane in Nepal's Terai**

Paper is an interim report on a long term study of the populations and habitat

requirements of the Saurus Crane in Nepal's Terai. In addition to analyzing the population structures and habitat requirements, the study includes research identifying the perceptions of local villagers on the status and importance of the Saurus Crane and explores the implications of villager attitudes to the conservation of this and related species.

Grazing pressures are intense and are at least partially responsible for this poor reproduction, but it is also likely that major disturbances are needed to initiate widespread reproduction of most canopy trees. Foresters in association with forest users need to initiate experimental plots to develop silvicultural systems which will ensure the regeneration of desired trees, many of which are current dominants.

Uma Singh  
*Jawaharlal Nehru University*

### **The Kashmir Dispute: A Regional Solution**

The Kashmir dispute between India and Pakistan is not new but has been contentious issue between the two countries since 1947. It is unfortunate that as a result of Kashmir insurgency, the old question of accession of Kashmir to India has been resurrected and old charges are repeated. It is notable that though-out the period from 1947 to date, the basic, arguments - political, moral and legal - about the Kashmir problem have remained the same. They have centered around three questions: the accession, the withdrawal of Pakistani troops and the ascertainment of the wishes of the people. The Indian part of Jammu and Kashmir is the place of all the recent controversies. To this day, the official rhetoric on both sides of the border still refers to Jammu and Kashmir as if it were a monolithic entity. In fact, three major religious represented in the state of Jammu and Kashmir. The vast majority of the people of Kashmir valley and Gilgit are Muslims, Jammu is Hindu; Ladakh and Baltistan are Buddhist. Only the Muslims of the Kashmir valley demand that their divided province

be united and that they be given the option to decide the question of their final accession.

Elizabeth Smaller  
*University of Toronto*

### **The Effects of Gender on Class Mobility**

The data for this paper are from a 1992 and 1993-4 study of a mountain village in Himachal Pradesh. In it, I examine the contemporary restructuring process of the village production system in light of the introduction of two new commodities: apples and tourism. This paper focuses on the perpetuation of gendered inequalities throughout policy-driven changes in production and despite changes in household class position.

The recent State-offered, capital intensive development incentives dictate very precisely the forms of the labour process employed by the family farm enterprise. As places for women in the production system narrow and, perhaps, disappear, places for men have started to expand. As the class position of the household as a whole becomes mobile as a result of capital-intensive development interventions, the status of women within the household has begun to change. Women are acquiring a heavier burden of work, losing power in family decision-making and neutralising the advantages of higher education.

J.R David Smith  
*University of Minnesota*

### **Forests of the Terai: A Tiger's Perspective**

The Terai of Nepal harbors a diverse large mammal community of 15 species ranging from elephant, rhino, and gaur to sloth bear, leopard, and tiger. The forest ecosystems in which they live represent some of the best remaining examples of southern Asia's unique biological heritage. Tigers and the Terai jungles symbolize this rich faunal diversity and are an integral part of the region's cultural history. Isolationism, malaria, and religious and philosophical traditions all contributed to the survival of the forests of the Terai. Now tourism has replaced isolationism; human immigration and a rising birth rate have followed the decline of malaria; and development goals have replaced traditional value systems. The result has been rapid change in land use and widespread decline in forest cover, that continues at a rate of 1.3% per year. The effects of forest loss on the Terai's natural ecosystems are compounded by the spatial configuration of the remaining forest cover. These lands form an 800 km long narrow belt, ranging from 2 to 25 km in width, which has already fragmented in several places. Because the tiger needs the largest area to maintain a viable population, it is likely to be the first species to become locally extirpated. During the past 8 years, degradation of the forest on the west side of the Karnali River appears to have isolated tigers in western Nepal from Royal Bardia National Park, and this population is too

small to survive for long. In this paper I discuss the landbase needed to support the Terai's diverse large mammal fauna and outline a landscape scale information system for the Terai that could be used to resolve land use conflicts between sustainable development, local people's needs and conservation goals.

Selma Sonntag  
*Humboldt State University*

### **Ethnolinguistic Identity and Language Policy in Nepal**

This paper analyzes the impact of Nepal's new language policy on ethnolinguistic identity. The new policy implements multilingualism in education and broadcasting, replacing the monolingual Nepali-only policy of the past. The criteria adopted by the language-policy-recommending bodies for selecting those languages to be used in education and broadcasting set the constraints under which ethnolinguistic groups must compete for state recognition and resources. The paper analyzes the response of two groups to these new constraints: the Tamang and the Tharu. The response of the Tamang is spurring forward the creation of a pan-Tamang ethnic identity; inversely the response of the Tharus is to create a language to add to the belongings of their imagined community. The former is a case of a language in search of an ethnic group, the latter a case of an ethnic group in search of a language. The searching is a by-product of the new language policy.

Lotus Stack  
*Minneapolis Institute of Art*

### **Foreign Markets, Home Production: the Kashmiri Shawl in the 19th Century**

The paisley pattern familiar on Kashmiri shawls has enjoyed periodical revivals since it was first used in the 18th century in England and Scotland and is currently much used in many items of clothing. The 19th century is a vital period in the history of the Kashmiri shawl and its adoption by the west. The Minneapolis Institute of Art contains an important collection of textiles. Shawls from that collection will be the basis for this investigation of the way foreign markets affected the weaving of shawls in India during the height of this commercial and artistic exchange.

Julia Thompson  
*Williams College*

### **Kathmandu Beauty Parlour**

When I walked into the back of Ritu's beauty salon—where hair is cut and styled, manicures given, and henna applied—the room was abuzz. "She shaved her head?" one woman queried with her head inside a dilapidated pink hairdryer.

"All her hair is gone?" an unmarried Newar woman asked incredulously smoothing the creases out of her

green *sarwal Kurta* as she sat on the arm of her sister's chair.

"But why did she do that? It wasn't necessary," the first woman continued taking her head out from under the dryer to hear the response more clearly.

"You know Indiraji," the senior stylist Kumari commented. "She has always worn her hair short, especially since she never married."

The second woman's sister was having her nails manicured. "So when her mother died, she shaved her head. Did you hear, she even went to Pashupati and lit the funeral pyre!"

I had lifted my sari to knee-height and was lowering my dirty feet into soapy water. "Wait!" I interjected in confusion. "How can a woman light the pyre?" I asked, knowing women do not have the right to go to the cremation.

Kumari's sister, Shima, was removing large plastic rollers from another woman's hair, and ventured, "Do you think she did it for the property? She didn't even give her brother time to come from India."

"But what kind of woman is she to shave her head like a man and light the pyre? She's too greedy," an Indian woman said as green henna powder was applied by Solin, a stylist from Calcutta.

Kumari tried to clarify, having known Indira for many years, "She didn't do it for the property, but to show that women should have rights like men, that we should be equal."

The henna slathered woman remained unconvinced. "If she had only married when she had that offer, she wouldn't need to fight for her father's property; her husband would have taken care of her."

The conversation continued like this, back and forth, women leaving off as they left the back rooms to hurry home or back to work, other women picking up the tails of the talk as they entered.

This is the beginning of a story of unmasking and potential betrayal among beauticians and customers and an anthropologist at Ritu's beauty salon in Kathmandu. Is it fiction or is it ethnography? What can I reveal in one genre that might be outlaw in the other? Reading selections from my ethnographic fiction and my narrative ethnography, I explore issues of unmasking and betrayal in representation. By forefronting authorial accountability—my own—in these different genres, I explore the different types of truth revealed through these genres.

Leonard W. J. van der Kuijp

### **Apropos of Two Biographies of Vanaratna**

While fifteenth century Tibet was visited by a number of Indian and Sri Lankan Buddhist monks and

laymen, the most outstanding of these was undoubtedly Vanaratna, known in Tibet as Nags kyi rin chen, the well-known scholar who also lived in the Kathmandu Valley for a number of years. His two closest Tibetan disciples were 'Gos Lo tsa ba and Khrim khang Lo tsa ba. The latter even visited him in the Kathmandu

Valley shortly before he passed away. In this paper we shall examine several aspects of his life in Tibet and Nepal, using his biographies by these two Tibetans, as well as Khrim khang Lo tsa ba's biography written by Zhwa dmar Chos grags ye shes.

### **XVI Annual Conference of The Linguistic Society of Nepal: November 26-27, 1995**

The Linguistic Society of Nepal organized a regional conference on "Language Problems in the SAARC Countries" on November 26-27, 1995.

The conference focused on the following issues:

- Official language problems and policy in SAARC countries
- Language Planning, theory and practice in SAARC countries
- Language movement in South Asia
- Language and Education
- Language and National Development
- Mother tongue education and its challenges
- Sociolinguistic developments/problems in South Asia

---

### **Future Conferences**

---

**Association for Asian Studies  
Honolulu, Hawaii: April 1996**

Todd Lewis, Council Member of the Nepal Studies Association has scheduled a meeting for NSA members at the conference.

**Association of American Geographers  
Charlotte, North Carolina: April 10-14 1996**

An informal meeting of Himalayan scholars and friends will be held; details will be posted at the meetings.

**Environmental Cultures: Historical Perspectives  
Victoria, British Columbia: April 26 - 27, 1996**

This inter-disciplinary conference on the relationships between environment and culture hopes to foster a meeting of social, political and ecological analysis.

Sessions are organized around natural resource exploitation/use within indigenous, colonial, and industrial societies. We expect papers that explore the transformation and linkages between these three stages, or that challenge this typology.

Contact:

Dr. Lorne Hammond and Dr. Richard Rajala  
Environmental Cultures Conference  
Department of History  
University of Victoria  
P.O. Box 3045

B.C. CANADA  
V8W 3P4  
TELEPHONE: (604) 721-7382  
FAX: (604) 721-8772  
E-MAIL: lhammond@sol.uvic.ca

**11th Himalaya - Karakoram - Tibet Workshop  
Flagstaff, Arizona: April 28 - May 1, 1996**

Abstract deadline was January 15, 1996. Three special sessions, Geodynamic Models of the Himalayas and Tibet, Neotectonics and Quaternary Geology of the Himalayas and Tibet, and Extensional Tectonics in a Compressional Orogenic System will form the focus of the workshop, although contributions on all geoscientific aspects of the Himalaya-Karakoram-Tibet region are appropriate. The meeting will include time set aside for debate and discussions of topics presented.

Contact:

Allison Macfarlane  
Dept. of Geography & Earth Systems Science  
George Mason University, 1E2  
Fairfax, VA 22030-4444, USA  
TELEPHONE: 703/993-1207  
FAX: 703/993-1216  
E-MAIL: amacfarl@osf1.gmu.edu.

**25th Annual Conference on South Asia  
Madison, Wisconsin: October 1996**

The Nepal Studies Association's Annual Meeting produced these ideas for panel and roundtable topics. Please contact the members indicated, or NSA Conference Council members Mary Cameron and John Metz, to participate, or if you know of other possible panels.

The NSA Executive Committee proposed a Roundtable on *Economic Globalization, Transnational Migration, and Ethnic Nationalism*. It would be an exploration of the blurring of national boundaries and markets within the region, simultaneous with the upsurge of nationalism and ethnic associations (contact Nanda Shrestha).

**ROUNDTABLE TOPICS:**

- *Tourism: Friends or Foe* (Heather Hindman)
- *Pollution in Kathmandu*
- *Theorizing Gender and Feminist Research* (Andrea Nightingale; Julia Thompson; Laura Ahearn; Mary Cameron)
- *Development of Hydroelectric Potential and Dam Building* (economics, ecology, ethno-ethics, etc.) (David Edds)

**PANEL TOPICS:**

- *Democratization and Economic Transformations* (Dyuti Baral)
- *Janajati and Ethnic Nationalism* (Heather Hindman; Laura Ahearn)
- *India/Nepal Research on Gender and Environment (Forestry)* (Andrea Nightingale, John Metz, Richard Tucker)
- *Water Resources Development* (Bishwa Acharya)
- *Himalayan Poets and Writers Read Their Work* (Julia Thompson)
- *Ethnic Movement in the Himalayan Regions: Causes and Conditions* (Gopal Singh Nepali)
- *Nepali Press and the Political Transitions* (Binod Bhattarai)

**HIMALAYAN FILMS**

- *Plans are in the works for a showing of new films ; contact Naomi Bishop*

*Remember the Nepal Studies Association  
Annual Members Meeting planned for Saturday at 6:00*

---

***Information Sought: Sherpas and Solukhumbu***

---

*Himalayan Research Bulletin's* editorial staff is preparing a special issue on the Sherpa and Solukhumbu. We seek publications lists, short synopses of research, historical notes, and information about resources of all kinds relating to the place and people. We would like to include original unpublished work, and invite the submission of (short) scholarly articles, personal reflections, photographs or other expressive work. We are particularly interested in including work done by Solukhumbu Sherpas themselves. The objective is a comprehensive reference tool to serve anyone with an interest in the region and its people. We begin with the Sherpa and Solukhumbu, as the area we know best, and hope to produce future issues around particular themes that fall within the interests and expertise of our readers. We invite proposals for such special issues, as well as contributions to the one presently in the works.

Please send your contributions and ideas to:

***Tenzing Gyazu Sherpa, Editorial Assistant***

***Himalayan Research Bulletin***

***Geography Department***

***Portland State University***

***Portland, OR 97297-0751***

***or (1-800) 547-8887, ext 725-8312 or HRB@geog.pdx.edu***

