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Book review of 'Nepal und die Himalaya-Region'  
by Ulrich Schweinfurth (ed), Martin Gaenszle and  
Dietrich Schmidt-Vogt (eds.)

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studies on the results of the well-known project to install low cost latrines that was initiated in 1976. Chitrakar carefully considers cultural factors in his analysis of impediments to providing sanitation and clean water, and points to complex ways in which the alienation of land in 1957 had various implications for traditional management of waste. Though Chitrakar does his own analysis of water needs for the future, some of his projections are based on 1983 data, which surely could have been updated. It would also have been very useful to include a recent study of the long-term impact of the low-cost latrine project to which many have looked as a model.

Mehrdad Shokoohy's chapter on tourism provides interesting (if somewhat dated) data on tourism in Kirtipur (from 1987), and attempts to assess the advantages and disadvantages of developing what seems to be a little-utilized potential resource for revenue. Here relevant lessons could be learned from Patan, which has only recently begun to develop tourist facilities in its historic center. Bhaktapur also provides valuable lessons with respect to the costs and benefits of making provision for tourists in conservation schemes, but larger lessons can be learned from this project as well. Apart from the contributions of experts who are residents of Kirtipur, voices of those who live

there are strangely absent from this volume. Though all of the authors profess and display sensitivity to Kirtipur as a place in which humans live and which humans continuously transform, we hear little about the aspirations of Kirtipurians for their own town, or their sense of what it means to live in Kirtipur, or the ways in which they might feel the changes documented in this volume have affected what Kirtipur is for them. A great deal of effort has been made in this volume to infer patterns of past activity and cultural significance from neglected buildings and worn images, and to document the architectural transformations that have been wrought by natural, socio-economic, and political forces. I would hope that as much effort would be expended to learn what those now living in Kirtipur themselves think about the place in which they live and what might be done to both improve and protect it. I also hope that it will not be construed as disciplinary chauvinism to suggest that this project (and others like it) would benefit from the input of an anthropologist or two, many of whom have been trained just outside Kirtipur's crumbling walls.

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*Neue Forschungen im Himalaya*. Edited by Ulrich Schweinfurth. Erdkundliches Wissen Vol. 112. Franz Steiner-Verlag: Stuttgart. 1993. Pp. 293.

*Nepal und die Himalaya-Region*. Edited by Martin Gaenzle und Dietrich Schmidt-Vogt. Beiträge zur Südasien-Forschung Vol. 166. Franz Steiner-Verlag: Stuttgart. 1995. Pp. 163.

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These two volumes bring together recent research in the Himalaya by German scholars. The papers were originally presented during seminars organized by the South Asia Institute of the University of Heidelberg in 1989/90 and 1993.

*Neue Forschungen im Himalaya* assembles a wide range of geographical and ethnological information, and should be read and used by everyone who is interested in Himalayan geography and ethnology. Most of the papers fall into one of two categories: biogeographic phenomena, and socioeconomic (especially cultural) change and development. U. Schweinfurth's 'Vegetation and Himalayan Research' contains very general information based on his 1957 vegetation map. It serves as an introduction, following Schweinfurth's statement that the "study of the vegetation is basic to understand a country and in particular a mountain region as

complicated as the Himalayan system" (p. 27). G. Miede's 'Plant Geography and Climatic Research' is based on fieldwork in 1986 in the Langtang/ Helambu Area of Central Nepal. His interpretation of plant life forms (especially epiphytes) and their distribution results in the following climatic classification: 1) lower cloud forest (2,000-2,500 m); 2) middle cloud forest (2,500-3,000 m); 3) upper cloud forest from 3,000 m to the upper timberline (~3,900 m). Both its methodological approach and results (including 14 informative maps) mean that the paper is a scientific advance in the plant geography of the region. J. Martens' 'Soil dwelling Arthropods in the Central Himalayas' seems rather specific, but is very informative. He regards the Himalayan fauna as an immigration fauna. Migration and isolation were the main factors for speciation in numerous neo-endemics confined to small areas and extreme mountain ecotopes. Arthropods are found in the Himalayas up to nearly 6,000 m. Low temperature, drought, wind, and lack of food supplies are the limiting factors for their existence at extreme altitude.

The authors of the following three papers are ethnologists. K. Jettmar's 'Preconditions, Course and Results of Human Adaptation in the Northwestern Himalayas and in the Karakorum Mountains' discusses, *inter alia*, the famous "health of the Hunzakuts." He notes that, as an individual's social position was often directly related to physical ability, children received systematic training, including rapid marches over long distances in a rough mountain environment. The deciding challenge was not so much walking on exposed paths, but the crossing of icy torrents and rivers in winter—and apparently even diving under the ice. Jettmar regards the phenomenon as "a result of natural selection and experience gained over many centuries" (p. 45). P. Snoy gives a detailed description of 'Alpine farming in the Hindukush and Karakorum.' Farming and stock breeding were formerly well-adapted to the natural environment and "kept the requirements of man on nature in balance for centuries" (p. 70). Over-utilization of natural resources on one hand, and political and military unrest on the other, may currently be disturbing and damaging this traditional equilibrium. Snoy also comments on the religious aspects of livestock farming. Interestingly, while the higher mountains, including pastures, are holy areas for Nuristanis and Dards, and therefore forbidden to women, among the Tadjiks all cattle tending and dairying is done by women, even at extreme altitude. S. von der Heide's short ethnological essay considers the Thakalis from the upper Kali Gandaki Valley in Central Nepal, traditionally known as farmers and traders. He analyses three specific ethnic groups and their forms of migration from 1928 to 1988.

Four lectures were presented by human geographers. H. Kreutzmann's 'Socioeconomic transformation and household reproduction in Hunza (Karakorum)' discusses recent development processes in remote mountain areas. The main topics of his informative and methodologically interesting case study are innovations in communication and traffic networks, migration processes, and development strategies of governmental and nongovernmental organizations. He proves that "the Kar-akorum Highway forms an important infrastructural asset to the overall strategy of integrating the mountain societies into the mainstream of Pakistan's nation-building" (p. 97). D. Schmidt-Vogt's informative article considers pastoralism and its ecological impact in the foothills of the Jugal Himal. He describes recent large-scale deforestation and overgrazing in the sub-alpine zone; over-utilization of grassland and forests in the densely settled lower altitudes; and only moderate pressure from grazing and farming in the intermediate mountain zone. E. Grötzbach's 'Tourism and Environment in the Mountains of North Pakistan' notes that the mountain scenery of the Karakorum, the West Himalaya, and the East Hindukush attracts an increasing number of domestic and foreign tourists. He stresses that the future development of tourist infrastructure should be adjusted to both the natural environment and the cultural heritage of the mountain population. C.

Kleinert documents 'Tradition and Change in the house types and settlement patterns in the Kali Gandaki Valley in Central Nepal,' caused by tourism, development projects, and road construction.

Schweinfurth's concluding article, 'Northwest and Northeast,' is "a contribution towards the Political Geography of the Himalayas." It compares territorial and political history and processes in these two areas, characterized by extremely contrasting natural mountain environments: open desert in the Northwest, and nearly tropical wet conditions and densely forested mountains in the East.

*Nepal und die Himalaya-Region* considers current political, economic, and social developments in Nepal which, since 1990, has had a special role as an 'independent state' within the Himalayan region. The book begins with M. Gaenzsle's profound study of 'Democracy in the Nepalese Context.' Since 1990, the installation of a multi-party system has initiated profound innovation in the political order and system of Nepal. But, as the author argues, a high degree of social continuity prevails: Nepal is still basically a multi-ethnic and multi-lingual nation, with strong traditional social hierarchies (caste system and cakari system). In spite of these socially-based handicaps to political modernization, democratization seems irreversible. D. Conrad evaluates 'The New Nepalese Constitution' from 1990. He notes that, while "the constitution of the Kingdom will be the foundation for the development of constitutional monarchy and multi-party democracy," the constitution is granted by the king "in exercise of the constitutional and royal powers and prerogatives inherent in us" (Article 4 of the constitution). Constitutional and royal powers still exist side by side, and there are still many obstacles to democratization.

The following four articles consider economic development. W. Donner tries to give an overview of the economic development of Nepal in recent decades, but provides only very general information. T. Hagen reports on 42 years of personal experience in Nepal and other developing Third World countries. Poverty, migration, political and economic dependency, and the negative effects of foreign aid are among the topics discussed. Overall, this contribution is rather general and pessimistic. B. Knall underlines the relationship between 'Economic Development, Participation and Decentralization in Underdeveloped Countries.' K.-D. Schütte briefly comments on 'Foreign Investments in Nepal,' predominantly in the economic sectors of tourism, industrial production, food and textile industries. He underlines that more than a third of foreign investment comes from India.

These papers are followed by three on environmental problems. Rieger discusses the current processes and 'Problems of Urbanization in Nepal.' Nepalese statistics define settlements with more than 9,000 inhabitants as urban areas or municipalities. In 1991 there were 36. Due to population increase and migration, the number

is predicted to increase to 57 by 2001, predominantly in the Terai. The most serious problems caused by urbanization which is too rapid are the growth of disorganized agglomerations, insufficient infrastructure, health problems and socioeconomic conflicts. D. Schmidt-Vogt presents a thorough investigation of forest degradation in Nepal. Using air photographs from 1965 and 1979, he shows that, while the forest cover in the Nepalese Terai (northern Gangetic plain) decreased by 24%, there was a decline of only 1.5% in the mountainous areas. From an ecological point of view, the degradation of forests by over-utilization is much more important. E. Spreen describes the installation of the first 'Solid Waste Management and Resource Mobilization Center' in the Kathmandu Valley, organized and supported for many years by German aid (GTZ). Shortly after the last GTZ advisor had left Nepal, the waste site was closed and the dream of organized waste management was over. The article not only reports the experience of the German-Nepalese cooperation, but seriously discusses the conceptual deficits in project planning and management. Related topics are considered in W. von Erffa's report on various sectors in official German-Nepalese relations: political and economic relations and cooperation in the fields of development and cultural policy.

Two contributions about refugees and human rights questions clearly depict the multi-faceted problems of

the country. S. von der Heide deals mainly with the problem of child labor in the carpet industry. L. Tüting's article is a rather emotional discussion of the problems of refugees from Tibet and Bhutan. While Nepal has been relatively liberal in giving asylum to refugees in recent decades, there has been a great increase in the number of refugees, especially from southern Bhutan. The resulting problems of resettlement and social integration are far from being solved.

The papers in this volume vary widely in quality. Some (especially those by Gaenszle, Conrad, Schmidt-Vogt) are based on solid investigation and are well written and documented (including references). Others (especially those by Donner, Hagen, von der Heide, Tüting) are more or less journalistic essays and personal statements, assembling heterogeneous ideas and topics. Nevertheless, these papers are also worth reading and discussing, mainly because of the authors' many years of practical experience in Nepal. All of the lectures given in 1993 were followed by intense discussions, professionally summarized by Gaenszle and Schmidt-Vogt. As a whole, the book is a good introduction to current discussion on the development of Nepal.

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