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Roundtable Panel: Before the Memories Fade

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Mohan Shrestha talks with Paul Karan; Jack Ives



John Metz, Joe Elder



Gerald Berrman instructs Barbara Brower



Jim Fisher, Gautam Vajracharya, Naomi Bishop

photographs by Subarna Pradhan

Roundtable Panel: *Before the Memories Fade*

Participants: Paul Karan, James Fisher, Gautam Vajracharya, Jack Ives, Gerald Berreman

Organizers: John Metz and Nanda Shrestha

Moderator and Transcriber: Naomi Bishop

Proceedings of a Panel sponsored by the Nepal Studies Association and held at the Annual Meeting on South Asia, Madison Wisconsin, October 1997

Naomi Bishop

I'd like to welcome you to our final panel of the 1997 Conference on South Asia. This is the Nepal Studies Association Roundtable which we began a couple of years ago as a way to gather scholars of the Himalayan region for informal discussion of topics of timely interest. The Roundtable format works as follows: several people are asked to prepare informal comments of about ten minutes length on a particular topic--in this case, recollections of how they began working in the Himalayas, how the field was at that time, and what they see as important for future work--and then the discussion is opened up for participation by everyone, including the audience.

This session was organized through the hard work of our incoming NSA President, John Metz along with our Executive Council member, Nanda Shrestha. John was kind enough to ask me to moderate it and introduce the session.

I started working in Nepal in 1971; I went there to study monkeys and spent almost two years at that time. And it is comforting to me to look around today and see that I am not a member of this panel--that there are so many people whose history in Himalayan research goes back much further than mine, and who are willing to come here and share their experiences, or as John so nicely put it, their legacies. I hope to be here at the table some years hence, but for now I look forward to hearing what our panelists have to say. This morning we have five distinguished Himalayan scholars who have agreed to participate, despite the title of the session: *Before The Memories Fade*. Let me introduce the first of our panelists, Dr. Paul Karan from the University of Kentucky.

Paul Karan (Department of Geography, University of Kentucky)

When John asked me to come on this panel, I really had no idea what he wanted me to say. I thought what I could do is tell you about my own interest in the Himalayas over the years--what I have done, or not done, or not done so well. And then if you have any questions or comments, we can talk more about it.

My interest in the Himalayas started in early 1950--I think it was 1951. I was in Nepal during the time of the palace coup and it kind of intrigued me. I was on a pilgrimage there to Pashupatinath temple and was staying with the Ambassador of India in Nepal. At that time, Indians were not allowed to enter Nepal unless you had a permit or you were going for pilgrimage. The situation as it developed was kind of intriguing, and as a geographer I began looking for some more facts about Nepal. In order to get a geographic description of Nepal, you had to go back to the writings of the Englishmen who visited the country sometime in the 19th century. So, there I was, trying to find out more about it. At that time we knew more about the Indian Himalayas than we did about Nepal. Nepal was virtually unknown in terms of the literature. I think now the situation seems to be reversed; we know more about Nepal than about many parts of the Indian Himalayas.

But anyway, the opportunity to do serious work in Nepal came to me in the late 1950s, when the development programs were started in Nepal by the United Nations and by the Indian government. I worked there for the U.N. in 1956 through a good part of 1958. There was an economist in charge of the development program (as they always are) and he didn't have very much to plan with, because he didn't know how much

agricultural land there was in Nepal or how much of the area was forested. He didn't even know how many people there were in Nepal, so he said, "You are a geographer; you go out and get this data for us so that we can do some planning." We also didn't have any maps of Nepal, so the earlier work I did was collecting the data on resource management, providing the maps, population data, distribution of population, etc.--it was kind of interesting, a challenging period. That research on the natural resources, population, and land use resulted in the book that I authored in 1960 on Nepal. There was a great excitement at that time in the country; there was an opportunity to do something and develop it.

I left after that, and later Bhutan had opened up in the early 1960s, and I shifted interest to Bhutan and went there and spent a year again with the government of Bhutan doing the same kind of thing which I had done earlier in Nepal. That resulted again in a book that I wrote sometime in 1966 or 1967. That was followed by work in Sikkim. I helped Sikkim prepare its first development plan. And so I had gone through all these three Himalayan border countries, Nepal, Sikkim and Bhutan. I was teaching at Kentucky and one day I got a call from the Nepalese government. They wanted to see what they had--twenty years had passed and things hadn't happened there like we had planned in the early 50s, and they wanted to see what had gone on and what new approach they could take. The French were doing a great deal of work at that time--a growth-centered strategy for development--and the Nepalese wanted to identify these growth centers. And so I went back to Nepal and spent a considerable time over there, preparing a document on the growth centers, identifying places where they could develop for investment and hopefully help the development of the country. The unfortunate thing was that the government changed, and the report just collected dust and was not implemented.

But I did publish the material I had done there and the map, and then while I was in Nepal and India, people were beginning to talk about environmental problems and development. The Stockholm conference was coming up and I think government officials were looking at environmental problems and the relationship of that and development and land-use and related items. So, based on the earlier work I had done, I went back again to Sikkim, Bhutan and Nepal, thirty years or so after I had left, to see what development had done to the environmental integrity of these countries as I had known them in the 1950s. And there were massive problems everywhere, partly because of the development activities themselves (road-building, military developments, and so forth). The situation of the landscape was not very good. I could still remember my first trip to the Kathmandu Valley in the early 1950s--my memory hasn't faded, despite the title of this session. You stood on the rim of the valley and you could see the whole valley, crystal clear with the great mountains in the background. Years later you couldn't

see the valley at all; it was all covered with smog. So the problems in the landscape were just tremendous as evidence of environmental degradation, not only in the urban areas but outside the urban areas.

I don't go to Kathmandu very much--it's expensive for one thing and that's not where the action is for a geographer. Interesting things are happening in places outside Kathmandu. So my interest was in environment and its relationship with development and how these countries can develop while at the same time protect their culture as well as environment. With that viewpoint, I was looking at what has happened in these countries and what went wrong. This resulted in books that I wrote on Nepal, Sikkim, and most recently, on Bhutan.

One of the things which is still a major focus (or should be focus) of research in the entire Himalayan area is the conflict over resource management. I think this is an important topic which people in the development area have overlooked. There is conflict in the use of water, energy resources, land resources, and forest resources. How do we resolve these conflicts and what is the paradigm in which this conflict can be resolved? I look at development as a triangular area, with economic efficiency and growth as one pole, cultural preservation with social equity as another pole, and environmental protection and ecological integrity of the area as the third. And development as it has been conceived in each of these areas (now we have four countries involved in the Himalayan area) and their policies are quite different in each of these four nations. So I think for a geographer or a Himalayan scholar, looking at this conflict over resource use is probably one of the top items to understand, especially how we can now promote what some people are calling sustainable development. I define sustainable development as incorporating economic, cultural, social as well as environmental objectives.

James Fisher (Carleton College)

Nanda Shrestha reminded us a couple of days ago about this session, and he said that when he titled it "Before the Memories Fade" he didn't mean that the memories would fade. I think he diplomatically, but unrealistically, didn't allow for the fact that the memories might have already faded, as I think they have in my case in many instances, and probably more have faded this morning than had faded Friday morning two days ago, but I will do my best.

What I am going to say is a little bit more personal--about how I came out of Kentucky to Nepal. It is a farther jump than from India in Dr. Karan's case. I guess it all began in the tree in my front yard which I liked to climb. I went from the tree in my front yard to the Kentucky mountains which I liked to climb and then to Colorado where I discovered real mountains (in fact, I was there the summer that Hillary and Tenzing climbed Everest--that was 1953. And I thought, well,

there goes my chance.) People ask me sometimes, since I was in the first Peace Corps group, was that how I got interested in Nepal and the answer is, "Sort of, not really." What it really goes back to I think, in my case, was that I read *Lost Horizons*, and I was absolutely enchanted with that book in a way that I have never been with any other book, and I just had to go and see it. I wanted to find it and see where it was. And so, Kennedy was elected, and the Peace Corps wrote me when I was a senior in college asking if I wanted to work in a training program in Puerto Rico training the Peace Corps. And I said, yes, I was interested in that. I said I wasn't interested in any regular Peace Corps assignment, unless there happened to be some group going to Nepal and I couldn't imagine that would happen. And then they wrote back and said, "Yes, that's what we're doing. Do you want to go?" At that time, I had already been accepted at the University of Chicago and I was planning to do that, but I couldn't turn down a chance to go, and that's how I ended up in Nepal. So, Nepal just sort of corroborated the earlier decision I had made, and I guess I was looking for Shangri-La when I went there, in the genuine sense that I was looking for alternative ways of life. At that point I was already alienated with my own society, and if looking for alternative ways of life is romanticism, then I am certainly a romantic.

I first went to Nepal in 1962. To get there we took a propeller plane from New York, which takes a lot longer than it does now. I met Dor Bahadur Bista there--just the year or two before, he had gone to England for the first time, and he had sailed from Bombay through the Suez Canal, so that is the sort of change in transportation we have experienced over the years. When I was there, of course I wasn't an anthropologist but I was interested in anthropology and I intended to study it, and I was kind of looking around for whatever anthropological scholarship might exist. There essentially wasn't any--at least in published form. There was a man named Ferdinand Okada, a Japanese who had gotten his Ph.D. at Columbia and worked for the USAID program in Nepal, who drew up modules about the Gurkhas and things like that to enlighten Americans in the establishment there. And John Hitchcock had just finished his first field work in Nepal but he wasn't there either, and Furer-Haimendorf of course had been there in the fifties and had written some articles, but they weren't available in Kathmandu and there was no monograph at all. There was one Japanese volume from the fifties. Haimendorf came and visited Nepal in 1964 which is when I went on one of Sir Edmund Hillary's expeditions. I had written to Haimendorf and asked him if he had any information about the Sherpas, because I knew he had been there, and he actually brought me a publisher's page-proof copy of the book and gave it to me. I thought that was very kind of him and I appreciated that. Anyway, there was no Tribhuvan University--I think on paper there might have been but there was nothing there yet--of course, no CNAS, no other anthropologists, no other

researchers of any kind that I could find, no Jesuits--Father Stellar, Father Locke, those people.

One thing I would comment on is that when I arrived in Nepal in September of 1962, 35 years ago, the first thing they did was to whisk us off to get shots. Now, we had studied Nepali for three months in this country before we left, and so I spoke to the Nepali guys who were giving us shots in Nepali, and they just sort of gasped, saying they had never heard a foreigner speaking their language before. Nowadays, if you speak Nepali, nobody bats an eye; in fact, I have the feeling that if tourists go out and don't speak Nepali, Nepalis want to know what's wrong with them, because it is so common now with Peace Corps volunteers, researchers, and foreigners who live in Kathmandu.

I always felt that the mountains were a harbor for diversity, in the sense that you expect different people in different valleys, just as you would expect a more homogenous situation on the plains, where people would be more alike. So I wanted to go into the mountains to find people. In fact, I wanted to return to the Sherpas where I had been with the Hillary expedition. I had been fascinated by some differences in community cohesion and cooperation development between Khumjung and Namche which I thought was related to the economic base of those villages, and I wanted to investigate that. I stopped in London on the way, for six months; to learn Tibetan and told Furer-Haimendorf what I wanted to do. He suggested that instead I go to Dolpo which was relatively unstudied. When I said I wanted to go to the Sherpas his reaction was: "But I have done the Sherpas." So I went to Dolpo. Let me just add, London was a wonderful place to study but I was sort of interested in what both Snellgrove and Haimendorf had to teach, and I kind of got caught in the cross-fire there. Snellgrove had written a very harsh book review of Haimendorf's Sherpa book, and he asked me to hand carry the review to Haimendorf. I never quite forgave him for that.

So I was going to go to Dolpo, and nobody exactly knew where it was or if it was prohibited or not, and I remember standing on the top of the verandah above Singa Durbar in the sunshine with Harka Gurung going over some maps trying to figure out where things were. He sort of had the power to decide what was permitted or not, and he somehow arranged things so that it was in the permitted area, so I got in. Then after I left, it was closed down for about twenty years and it's only recently been opened again.

My interests there were in the environment but on a very small scale, local level--environmental, ecological, economic problems--basically how people made a living in this essentially peasant agricultural area but also heavily involved in trade, including international trade. So that was my Ph.D. work. When I finished that, I went back to the Sherpas in the early seventies. I wanted to pick up this interest that I had abandoned. When I got there, I was astonished to discover all these

tourists there, because when I had been there in 1964 there was a total of 20 foreigners in Khumbu that year. That was the year we built the Lukla airstrip. When I came back in 1973, there were hundreds of tourists there, and I had no idea that had happened. In fact, when we built the airstrip, we had no idea that would happen--the airstrip was built to service what was to be Kunde Hospital. Of course, instead, the tourists came. So then I got interested in the impact of tourism and what was happening with this extremely sudden change there; not only tourism but also education, because we had been building schools in the Sherpa villages and I was interested in what impact those had had. So that put me off in a new direction which is what I dealt with in the book I did on the Sherpas.

At the same time, I felt that somehow I was missing something. The core of Nepal was somehow not really in these obscure, remote places. Nepal was essentially a Hindu country, controlled by people with political clout, economic power and education. Jobs were, and had been increasingly over the centuries, Hindu, and I thought if you didn't understand that part of Nepal you didn't understand what Nepal was all about. So I wanted to get into that more. And I also wanted to look more at the individual than I had, and the conceptual notion of human agency that I felt I had ignored. And I wanted to somehow give a voice more to the people I was working with, rather than standing apart and pontificating about them and objectifying them, and being the self-pronounced expert, so I hit upon the idea of doing a life history.

Fortunately I stumbled across Tanka Prasad Acharya who was not only in many ways a conventional middle class Brahmin but also a political revolutionary who founded the first political party in Nepal and had been a human rights activist interested in social justice--these were all things I was interested in. He wanted to tell his story because everybody else has written about him--political scientists and others--and he had been attacked and wanted to tell his own story. So I thought this is the perfect vehicle for him and for me. I also wanted to tell the story of his wife, because I thought while he had been written about at great length, most people didn't even realize she existed. She had done really quite extraordinary things herself, both in her own right and in helping him by smuggling letters out of prison and hand carrying them to Jai Prakash Narayan and prime minister Nehru in India and others. So, the result was this dual life history which just came out a few months ago called **Living Martyrs**. The title was derived from the nickname for Tanka Prasad in the press--he was always referred to as "the living martyr" because the four martyrs whose statues are at Martyrs' Gate and the Tundikhel had died--those were his friends. The Ranas couldn't execute Tanka Prasad, despite the fact that he was the ringleader, because he was a Brahmin and it was too great a sin to do that. All they could do was throw him into prison for life, confiscate his property, take his house, and throw his wife and children out on the

street. So for ten years while he was in prison, his wife was also being a martyr--if he was being a martyr, certainly she was, and so that is why **Living Martyrs** refers to both of them.

So that is kind of what I have been up to. You asked about areas of future research. I think the formation of ethnic identity is certainly a critical area that people should be investigating. I looked at a recent manuscript by Bill Fisher on Thakali identity, which is very much contested among Thakalis--who is and who isn't, who counts and who doesn't--and that is a fascinating study. I was struck by the comparison with the Sherpas where ethnicity is also somewhat problematic, but it is not contested. No Sherpa that I have ever met cares who is a Sherpa, or claims to be, or isn't. So that's interesting--politics and ethnicity with the so-called Mongoloid movements, the hill peoples--all this since 1990. Now violence and nationalism, the Maoist movement. I've also gotten involved in testifying. Various Sherpas have been arrested at the Los Angeles airport taking drugs into the country and I've been testifying in their trials, because the real drug kingpins remain undiscovered while these Sherpas are rotting in jail. I must say I was notoriously unsuccessful in my defenses--all my defendants lost their cases. I also feel that we particularly need to help Nepalese scholars where we can--I spent two years helping start the Sociology-Anthropology department at Tribhuvan University. And Professor Berreman and others have been helping there too. Finally, I spent a few months in Sri Lanka last year, and I was struck by the comparisons and contrasts of another small independent country on the periphery of the Indian subcontinent. I thought those comparisons were very interesting and I'd like to do something with that. And as for Shangri-La, I am still looking . . .

Gautam Vajracharya (University of Wisconsin, Madison)

I am a Sanskritist, but I am also interested in South Asian art history. I went to a Sanskrit school for fourteen years. It was a traditional Sanskrit school which didn't even have a name. There I studied Sanskrit literature and grammar as well as Indian and Nepalese history and epigraphy. I am a son of a Buddhist priest. At home I studied from my father Buddhist Sanskrit and rituals. My father also taught me Buddhist iconography. And that knowledge of Sanskrit, history, epigraphy and iconography brought me here to this country. I came to the United States in December 1974 in order to work with Dr. Pratapaditya Pal, the curator of the Los Angeles County Museum. I worked in the museum for four years, but I didn't have a bachelor's degree. I did not even have a high school degree. But I had published three books: one on the Hanumandhoka palace, another on Nepalese inscriptions with Mahesh Panra, and another on Prithvinarayana Saha with Nayaraj Panra and others. I applied for admission to American universities because I thought I should have a

Ph.D. I was admitted to the Claremont Graduate School on the basis of my publications. I received a master's degree in art history from the Claremont Graduate School and a Ph.D. from the University of Wisconsin, Madison in Vedic studies. Within these fifteen years I have done some interesting research.

I don't know how to begin--maybe I will begin with an event that happened yesterday. I was in the conference bookstore downstairs and I grabbed a new book on Vedic studies. Meanwhile, I met an old friend of mine. He looked at the book that I had in my hand. He said to me, "Vedic studies . . .," and then laughed. He knew that I am a Buddhist Newar from Kathmandu, yet I am getting Vedic texts. He found me very strange, and he laughed--not that loud, but I still remember that laugh even today. I find Vedic study very helpful for understanding Newar culture, or Nepali culture. In the West, Vedic literature is considered to be associated with Indo-Iranian heritage; whereas in Nepal the Vedas are regarded as the texts of traditional Brahmins who chant them loudly during wedding ceremonies. Only those scholars who study them carefully understand that Vedic texts include not only Indo-Iranian heritage but also monsoon culture of India. Although the Vedic Aryans came from the other side of the Hindukush--after they settled down in the Punjab and neighboring regions--they began to adopt the monsoonal culture of the Indian subcontinent. Fortunately, it is this monsoonal culture recorded in the Vedic literature that helps us to understand some aspects of Newar culture.

Sravanakulapurnimo is the full moon day of the second month (or the first month depending on which part of the Indian subcontinent you are in) of the rainy season. This day is celebrated all over the Indian subcontinent. Newars of the Kathmandu Valley celebrate this particular day as *Gumphuni*. The New Jyapus (farmers) of the Valley have an interesting ritual of frog worship called *byanja nakegu*, "feeding rice to the frogs." On this day, the Jyapus go to their farm with many varieties of grain and also tiny clay frog figurines. They put the grain in the cavities of the four figurines and place the figurines in the middle of the field. Then they look upward and praise the frogs in Newari, "O frogs, last year you provided us with plenty of rice and other grains. This year give us plenty." It is a simple ritual but it goes back to a period much earlier than *Rgveda* which was composed C. 1500 B.C.

There is a famous Rgvedic hymn called the "Frog Hymn." Just like the Jyapus of the Kathmandu Valley, the Rgvedic Aryans worshipped the frogs in the very beginning of the rainy season. They chant, "O frogs prolong your life, provide us with hundreds of cows in a thousand-soma-pressing." Unlike the Jyapus, the Rgvedic Aryans were not exactly agrarian; they were more or less pastoralists. This is the main reason they asked for cows instead of grain. However, there is no reason to doubt that this ritual of frog worship, which is closely associated with the typical Indian seasons,

was in vogue long before the Rgvedic Aryans came to India. They did not bring this ritual of monsoonal culture with them when they migrated from Afghanistan. The monsoonal clouds do not go beyond the Hindukush mountain range.

Just before the rainy season Rgvedic Brahmins shave their hair ritually. Originally this ritual was based on the belief that human hair, including body hair, is vegetation and vice-versa. Therefore, "green" vegetation was considered hair of a creator god or the earth goddess. If a man or woman had plenty of hair it meant he or she was fertile. In the *Rgveda* a woman called Romasa (hairy) says to her lover, "Touch me, fondle me. Do not think that I am infertile. My entire body is hairy like a she-goat of Gandhara." Another Rgvedic hymn is associated with the story of an adolescent girl Apala. She didn't have pubic hair, so she was worried. One day when she was on the way to a river, she found a plant. She offered that plant to Indra. Indra appeared in front of her. Apala said to him, "O Indra, make these three regions sprout: my daddy's head and cornfield, and this (region) below my abdomen. That cornfield of ours, and this my body and my daddy's head--make all of these full of hair." Her father's head was bald not because he was old, but because he shaved just before the rainy season so that it would start growing with the vegetation of the rainy season.

It is interesting to know that even these days throughout South Asia, including the Kathmandu Valley, traditional Brahmins shave their heads at this time of year. Even more interesting is the fact that this Brahmanic rite is observed exactly on the same day, *Sravanasuklapurnimo*, when the Jyapus worship the frogs. It is true that the Vedic system of counting the days of years and months has gone through some changes, but the Indian seasons have not changed much. Therefore, I believe that this is not a mere coincidence.

If there is anything that unites the Indian subcontinent it is monsoonal culture. Buddhists, Jains and Hindus annually celebrate rainy season rituals. We just need to check their traditional calendar to understand how important monsoonal culture is in the religion and everyday life of South Asian people. When Buddhism became popular on the other side of the Himalayas, even Tibetans began to celebrate rainy season retreat, although there is no rainy season in Tibet. Thank you.

Jack Ives (University of California, Davis and Carleton University)

I am pleased to be here, but I have to confess I fear I am here under false pretenses. The first research that I began to do in the Himalaya wasn't until 1979, so I have no excuse about fading memories. On the other hand, my fascination with that region of the world goes back to probably the age of 7 or 8 and I'll be rather personal about this. I grew up in England. I began grammar school at the age of 11 during World War II and, as an 'Englishman,' of course, I was being trained

to run the Empire. Part of the training was to develop young boys (and I say, boys because the gender preference made it boys who would grow up to be the committed and obsessed people who ran the Empire), to grow up admiring people like Burnes, Moorcroft, Younghusband and Mallory, and so there was, in addition to Scott, Shackleton, and Wilson, an aura of the Himalaya and Tibet and 19th century poetry that had a major impact on my psyche. I will just quote one piece which I am sure that many of you know: "For lust of knowing what should not be known we take the golden road to Samarkand" (James Elroy Flecker).

I had a fantasy competition with my longest standing friend (we've known each other from the age of five) to see who would reach Samarkand first. I did, but it took me until 1968. I bypassed Nepal. I attended the Delhi International Geographical Congress, went to Kabul and had a glance of the Hindu Kush. I then went on to Samarkand and the heart of the "evil empire." That changed my life, but for another reason. Our IGU meeting on mountain geomorphology was held in Darjeeling in late October, early November of 1968. Some of you may remember that was a week or two following a catastrophic rainstorm that hit the Darjeeling Himalaya. Something on the order of 100 inches of rain fell in three days at the end of the monsoon season. As a non-statistical geomorphologist, the best count I could do was that some 20,000 landslides had occurred in one morning. With old friends, Fritz Muller and Barry Biship, I took the road from Siliguri up to Darjeeling, a distance of about 50 miles through an altitudinal range of six or seven thousand feet. I was overwhelmed with comments from everyone we met that this disaster was the result of ignorant peasant farmers cutting down all the trees. Therein, I think, lies my commitment, my being bound to the Himalaya. It took some years before I could think again about that topic. I am relieved looking back, because some of you will know I have done a major switch in my interpretations, but I did publish something that is little known, and certainly never referred to, in 1970 in the **Canadian Geographical Journal**. It was something of a tourist article but I did raise the question (I think to my credit at the time) that I didn't really believe that deforestation was the cause of the disaster. Rather, it was a geomorphic event of great magnitude and very long recurrence interval.

Subsequent to that, I began to rub shoulders with the UNESCO Man and the Biosphere Program, with Carl Troll and a group of German geographers, and with Erik Eckholm. I think it is appropriate for me to confess in this room that Erik very kindly sent me a copy of the manuscript of his book, **Losing Ground**, to edit. It was only a few years later that I think some of you know I wrote a fierce assault on the notion of deforestation being responsible for landslides and for flooding in Gangetic India and Bangladesh. By that time, I had become closely associated with a group of

challenging and exciting people at Bern University, led by Bruno Messerli, and we had been indulging ourselves in trying to develop methods of mapping mountain natural hazards both in the Colorado Rockies and in the Alps. And on a purely opportunist basis, I found myself invited by a German geographer, Walter Manshard, who had become newly appointed as Vice Rector of United Nations University based in Tokyo. I had never met him before, and out of the blue, he invited me to his house. There he said that he had a program he wanted to fill because he only had a four-year appointment and, being very appropriately Germanic, he wanted to achieve something in a very short time. Would I take on one of the pieces in his organizational plan? And here was a box that was labeled Highland-Lowland Interactive Systems, and I said "What's that?" and he said, "I don't know. But I am told you have the imagination to put something there." I said, "But the first half of my career I considered myself a glaciologist, and worked on the glaciation of arctic Canada which is very inhuman and a long way from these things that I've become trapped in during the latter half of my career. (I refer to this as the "humanization of Jack Ives.") I said to Manshard, "That's somewhat disturbing but first, what's the budget?" "Ah," he said, "A hundred thousand a year for five years, no questions asked." So I said, "OK, I'll do it. But I have one condition: I must get your approval before I agree to work in the Himalaya and follow up these thoughts that hit me in 1969 about heavy rains and 'ignorant' peasant farmers and landslides and flooding in Bangladesh." So he said, "Well, we'll only agree to that if you will go to Chiang Mai University for us and do an evaluation of the university, no less, in terms of deforestation problems and opium growing, etc. amongst the hill tribes in Thailand." and I looked at him and said, "But it is impossible. I am an Arctic man. I will die in Thailand." And he said, "Well, Jack, that's the deal." And so I went, very fortunately, to Thailand with Gerardo Budowski (some of you may know this great man who led me by the hand and the nose and kept me on a reasonable track in Thailand), and this is where I fell in love with mountain ethnic minorities. And I think that has stood me, personally, and selfishly, in good stead.

When the UNU/Himalaya deal was cooked, I thought the first place to go to was Darjeeling, which I did. We found very quickly that we would have serious problems over freedom of access to the research we wanted to do in India, and so we shifted over into Nepal which was much more open. This led us into what became an assault on what I termed "the theory of Himalayan environmental degradation." This led to a conference, the Mohonk Conference in 1985 (I see several faces in this room who attended), which was one of the most thrilling events of my life. We had some very cantankerous, controversial people. And, to cut a long story short, one of the things that arose from "Mohonk" was the book that Bruno Messerli and I authored, **The Himalayan Dilemma**. Looking back

over nine years, I think it is quite clear that we overstated our assault by going a little too far toward the other extreme. Perhaps it was necessary to do that, because we are now well into the political arena and I was concerned then, and I am very concerned now, that big agencies like simplified problems and tend to feel they can "solve" them by throwing large sums of money at them. And that really explains the commitment of my last ten years which has been more political, perhaps, than research oriented. I have devoted a lot of time personally, but with a lot of help from many people, to push through the Rio Summit the acceptance of Chapter 13--that is, "Managing Fragile Ecosystems, Sustainable Mountain Development"--to become part of the Agenda 21 Document. And this would never have been done without a lot of institutional help, and without the personal intervention of Maurice Strong who was Secretary General, but who also (as Barbara Brower and Paul Karan will remember) did grace us at Mohonk with a display of diplomacy in seeking to get unanimously-sponsored recommendations through our final meeting. That is the political element, and I should say that post-Rio has seen a lot more of the same kind of activity. Bruno Messerli and I were asked by the UN Committee on Sustainable Development to prepare a report on mountains for the so-called Rio Plus Five Special General Assembly of the UN. That almost wiped me out. We did produce the book in time (barely). I hope some of you eventually will see it. It is expensive, more expensive than it should have been, but we did deliver it to the UN last June. And next month several groups of the co-workers will be meeting in Kathmandu at the request of the Swiss Development Agency to put together a plan, at least within the cognizance of this group, for longer range mountain research. And I've been encouraged with the hint of a significant level of to keep this journal, **Mountain Research And Development**, going, with which some of you are familiar. My problem with this journal is that the person who really put most of the work in has now finally got the better of me and has retired--that is Pauline Ives.

So that perhaps explains my general involvement. Of course, I went to the Himalaya partly out of this fascination as a schoolboy with heroics and British imperial history. Once I got there, I fell in love with the people, as we all do. Our mountain hazard mapping program that began in the Kakani hills very close to Kathmandu, partly for political reasons, stemmed from the sincere belief that we would be producing maps to assist government and agencies to put roads in the correct places, to build dams safely, and to help to reduce the devastation that Erik Eckholm wrote about so effectively and, we believe, so incorrectly. It was only about 18 months later when we had the good fortune to recruit a young Nepalese woman, Sumitra Manandhar Gurung (Ph.D. Geography, University of Hawaii 1986), as one of our team, who gave us access to village women, that we began to find out that if these so-called "ignorant" peasant farmers deliberately start landslides

on their own and have a fairly full understanding of the processes involved (even if they don't use our geomorphic terms, they know what's going on), there must be something wrong with the notion that these "ignorant" people have too many children, that they cut down too many trees, and so on. I was delighted just the other week to be reviewing a book edited by Chapman and Thompson (this is the famous Michael Thompson of **Uncertainty on a Himalayan Scale**) and a group of British geomorphologists through the Royal Geographical Society who have just done what Bruno Messerli and I would have longed to have done ourselves, and that is, a full-scale geomorphic appraisal of a terraced mountain slope to try to determine the geomorphic impact of terrace farming on that slope. Their conclusion very nicely supports our rather flaky conclusions of 1989, that agricultural terracing is probably better for soil conservation than if it had been left in forest. Now I am putting these remarks over deliberately as controversial and slightly outrageous comments. What we have all learned is that mountain terrain, by definition, is extremely complex. When we superimpose onto the physical complexity the layer of mountain cultures and history, then we clearly have the most complicated landscapes in the world. And what has disturbed me, and still disturbs me, is that powerful agencies with large sums of money find it convenient to carve out simple problems that they feel they can "solve" by developing panaceas. And I think at large, the world is seriously damaged by this approach. I hope that more and more people from the university side who are relatively free to say what they think without fear, do a little more to stop this.

Now I am politicizing the issue very strongly, so I will end with a little anecdote. Shortly after **The Himalayan Dilemma** was published, I was invited to give a lead paper at an internal World Bank seminar on watershed management in Asia. I said I had to confess that I felt a little bit uncomfortable speaking because I had just published a book, and somewhere in it was a sentence that said that the single biggest threat to the Himalayan environment was the World Bank. And they said, "Yes of course, we knew that, that is why we invited you." But they never invited me again.

Naomi Bishop

Our final speaker is Dr. Gerald Berreman of the University of California at Berkeley, who graciously agreed at the last minute to join us. We had no idea he was coming to this meeting and since he clearly belongs on this panel, he will be our final speaker.

Gerald Berreman, University of California, Berkeley

Yes, I was told about five o'clock yesterday afternoon that I might attend, and I had no idea what the content was supposed to be except faded memories, which suggests that maybe there is no content. One

problem with growing older is that everything reminds you of something else, and I think this why elderly professors are either avoided or sought out by students because they know that their lectures will not be linear, but rather tangent, tangent, tangent.

I want to start with an anecdote that was going to be later in my talk as I thought about it, in response to Jack Ives' comment. When I first arrived in India and took the train to Dehra Dun, I took a horse-drawn *tonga* to the White House Hotel which took an enormously long time to get to because you had to go around and around and around to get there. (I later found out, in a straight line it is only about a half a mile from the railroad station.) I didn't have change with which to pay the *tonga wallah* and there was an elderly gentleman sitting on the porch of the hotel with his drink in his hand who turned out to be Lieutenant Colonel Taylor of the Sappers and Miners (Army Corps of Engineers) who had been in charge of dealing with the middle mountain area. He had change and sent the guy away very quickly, because he said he was charging me way too much, and we became friends. He had been ejected from the Dehra Dun Club because he tended to drink too much, so he was living in the White House Hotel. This meant to get his drinks he had to go to the Dehra Dun Club and try to get back without falling down. He knew a lot about the ecology of the mountains, and although I was at that point not intending to work in the mountains, I remember him telling me about the tremendous incidence of landslides. He anticipated many of these things Jack was talking about. He never mentioned the people or the farming; he just talked about the instability of the mountain environment. I never forgot that, because his job was to deal with the many, many landslides that occurred, and that was before there were very many roads; it was mostly trails.

I'll tell you a little bit about how I got interested. I had, as many young people did during the 1940s, an interest in India's independence movement, in Gandhi and the throwing off the British yoke of imperialism, and that probably got me interested in South Asia. When I got to Cornell University, I was interested in India. I didn't yet have any conception of the Himalayas as an area in which I would work. Some of my fellow graduate students were Sylvia Vatuk, Pauline Kolenda, John Hitchcock, who was there as an older graduate student, but it was well before he had gone to Nepal. He was running a huge research project that Cornell was supporting in the plains of North India near Saharipur, called the Rankundi project. Allan Holmberg was my favorite teacher there (he is David's father--an expert on the Andes; David was probably a year old then), and Mike Mahar (Pauline Kolenda was then, Pauline Mahar). Morris Opler was my teacher. So, those are some of the people who were there. I was supposed to be a teaching assistant to Opler, but instead he used me as a research assistant to code a whole lot of data that he got from the village of Rankundi, from his many students and the many students from Lucknow (it was a

joint project with Lucknow). And that increased my interest in village India, but it steeped me in north Indian plains and Uttar Pradesh rural culture.

Michael and Pauline (Mahar) had done language study in Mussoorie and had passed through Dehra Dun. The project which I wanted to pursue was sort of a Robert Redfield thing, comparing people that are very remote from an urban area and people that are very close to an urban area of the same ethnic group--the impact on their social organization, caste relations, and so forth depending on whether they were isolated or whether they could go in daily to a job on a bicycle. Michael had bought a lot of half inch to the mile maps of the Dehra Dun Valley, which he spread out on the floor and it covered an area at least half as big as this room. He said, "This is the place you ought to go. It looks like a nice place." I had a year old daughter I was going to take and it would be near medical facilities, so I studied it with him and had in mind a bunch of villages in that Tarai Valley which I would use for my research. I went to Dehra Dun and in the course of looking for villages, I happened to go to a little place some of you might have encountered called Nagal, which is more or less in route to Mussoorie, a little to the east of the road to Mussoorie. And in talking to a teashop keeper there who took an interest in the fact that I was doing the kind of thing I was doing, he said, "Why don't you go up in these hills? It's fascinating." And I said, "But I'm an anthropologist. I want to go where there are people." He said, "That's what I mean!" So he told me what trail to take and a couple of days later I went up there. After taking a number of wrong turns, I finally arrived at the top of a ridge where there was a tea shop (actually there were two tea shops but only one was open). I asked the teashop keeper, "Where is Sarona?" which is the real name of the village I called Sirkanda, since I saw nothing but his teashop. He said, "You're in it!" It turned out it was over the ridge, and to make a long story short, when I saw that village and when I saw other villages in the vicinity (I looked around for a period of about a month at a number of locations) I was absolutely fascinated. I thought these people are different from the people I have learned about by hearing Opler's students from Rankundi near Saharipur, yet in many ways they are similar: their architecture is fascinating, their language is different (it's very similar to Nepali), their whole environment with its terraced hillsides and its view of mountains. I knew that was where I was going to work and I fell in love with the Himalayas and I've stayed that way ever since, focusing virtually all my research on that area. That was in 1957 and 1958.

Oh, by the way, Jim, I didn't go on a propeller-driven plane. I went to India on freighter and it took about a year and a half to get there it seemed. It was actually about a month and half, but I had just been studying for my Ph.D. orals and I took a lot of novels and books on India and read them, taking my time. I

could have gone on the plane--I am not saying they weren't invented yet.

So I worked there and my interest was really how Sarona was similar to and different from villages on the north Indian plains, but I had a special interest in social inequality. I had lived two years in Montgomery, Alabama just shortly before I had gone to graduate school. It was a total shock to me as an Oregonian to see the racism there, and I was interested in comparing the (Indian) caste system to the American racial caste system. So that was a major interest. But I did a general ethnography. Anybody who knows Professor Opler knows that you are supposed to use the vacuum cleaner approach, in which you discover everything and then you write it up in some coherent fashion, he hopes.

When I was there, I was on a Ford Foundation grant which were the only kinds of grants available at that time, and I was called to Delhi very soon to attend a conference of the Ford Foundation grantees to tell about their progress. So far, I had made no progress which put me kind of on the spot, but it was just my first couple of months. And there I met a guy named Joe Elder who had been camping under a mango tree in, I think Maradabhad, doing a sociological study, and I felt intimidated because he was so familiar with all his stuff and I was still looking for a village to work in. Another guy there was one who did not come today (and I think I might not have been invited if he had because he is on the program): Leo Rose, a political scientist doing research in Nepal. So that shows that we go a long way back--Joe Elder and I--and both have faded memories . . .

Subsequently I did a study in Dehra Dun, which is a Garhwali village in the Uttar Pradesh Himalaya, essentially the Ganges Watershed. I was interested in how caste and other bases for inequality are lived out in a city. At that time, it was a city of 250,000; now it must have a million people. I worked in the bazaar a lot with expatriate Garhwalis--people that frequented the bazaar, people that worked there and traded their agricultural goods there, people that had little shops there and also professionals in the forestry department or post and telegraph department where many Garhwalis are employed. I did that urban study ten years later, in 1968. On the way there I stopped at the International Congress of Anthropological and Ethnological Sciences where they were holding their every-fourth-year meeting between Tokyo and Kyoto, spending half the time at each place. In Kyoto, they said they would have a Himalayan session which they said would be in a Himalayan-like environment, Mt. Hie, which is at the altitude of about 2000 feet. There I met Corneille Jest, and Macdonald, and Prince Peter of Greece and Denmark and all kinds of Himalayanists, most of whom worked in Nepal. Very few people had worked in India at that time; in fact, in the Garhwal-Kumaon area, I think no anthropologist had worked at that time. So these

people inspired me, I stayed in touch with them, and I took a trip that spring to Nepal where I got a substantial understanding of Nepali culture and society. I was there for a week. I think it would have been even more profound but I had gone to a wedding the night before we went to Nepal. The younger of my daughters who was about eight years old then had always wanted to see a real Indian wedding. So an anthropologist, Professor Mehra in the Anthropology Department at Delhi, had a sister-in-law who was getting married. We were invited and Lynn got to see all the glorious clothing and so forth, and I ate the chicken and so forth, and I was so sick for the first half of our time in Nepal, I couldn't even stand up. The rest of my family went on those rhino tours which they had then (there were six half-day van tours by the government tourist agency) and I lay in bed. Finally, on the third day, we got in touch with Dr. Bethel Fleming, a missionary doctor, who gave me some antibiotics, and I felt pretty good. I acquired my knowledge, my understanding of Nepal, in the following three days, by frantically taking all six tours! So I still remained pretty innocent of knowledge of Nepal.

After another period in which I had become interested in an amateurish way, in a number of issues that Jack Ives is interested in, I looked at the Chipko movement in India, because it arose in the district in which I worked. And although it had not directly affected our village, many people don't realize that this indigenous environmental movement is extremely localized--just two very small areas that it affected directly, but it got world-wide press. I looked at the Chipko movement, but there were complex political things going on that prevented me from doing certain kinds of research. There was a by-election and there was a tremendous amount of violence included in it, so I had to work partly from secondary sources. I didn't get to spend as much time in the mountains as I would have liked, but spent a lot of time reading political manifestos, listening to speeches, and going to the village where I had lived before, because it was outside of the troubled area. (These trips were at ten year intervals--I kept in touch with the village over the forty years, several times each decade.) That inspired me to go to Nepal and I got a grant. Fulbright created a new kind of grant. They used to have a teaching grant or research grant, but they came up with the idea of a teaching and research grant. And I thought, that's good for me because I am not a Nepal expert; I can't expect to do something that will push forward the frontiers of knowledge about Nepal, but I can learn about Nepal and compare it with what I know about India. And the teaching would give me contact with the intellectual community. So I was quite happy to get it. This grant is beautifully designed to guarantee that you will do justice neither to your teaching nor to your research. I didn't have time enough to get really involved with the research to the extent I would have liked because of my teaching obligations. My feeling that I had to fulfill my research obligations kept me from really making the

contributions to the teaching that I would like to have made, but the fact that the university was only in session for about two and a half months for the six months I was there really minimized the intrusion that teaching made on the research. But I did learn a great deal at that time, and became acquainted with Ives and Messerli and all these people with the revisionist idea of what's happening in the Himalayas, which resonated with my prejudices and preconceptions so well that I immediately recognized that it was true. And there was a guy named Bob Fisher there whom I did not get to know there but I got to know after (many of you know him--there are many Fishers in anthropology studies--Bob, Bill, Jim, and others), the Australian Forestry project, many forestry projects. What I was interested in there was to compare the ideas in India--definitions of what constitutes the environmental problem in the Himalayas--and I think I know what is thought administratively and in the press and among the people in Garhwal (what is now being called Uttarakhand because they hope to be an autonomous state), the U.P. Himalaya, and extending over to some extent to Himachal. I wanted to know how that compares to the ideas about environmental degradation in Nepal, and especially about the grassroots responses to how they perceive the problem, as well as administrative responses. Obviously that is too big a chunk to do it in one six month period, especially when you are busy teaching an occasional class at the university, but that is the direction I'd like to go in future.

And I think that was inspired by a question that had occurred to me (although I think it is pretty easily answered actually): how come in India there is a Chipko movement, which is a world-renowned grassroots "save the forest/save the environment movement," and there is no such substantial grassroots movement like it in Nepal, so far as I knew. And yet the anti-Tehri Dam movement, and the anti-Arun III (two huge dams, one in Tehri in Garhwal and another being built at Arun III), had very active grassroots movements against them. So I was interested in finding out how come these kinds of responses to deforestation occurred, and how come these kinds of disparate definitions of the sources of deforestation were made. And I absolutely agree with what Jack said--I lived in this Garhwali village much of the time for 15 months, and they have terraced agriculture. I know how carefully they tend those terraces and how little erosion there is compared to the erosion you see on the trails or where the commercial timber merchants are slaughtering the mountains and the commercial limestone extractors are destroying the whole environment. The Dehra Dun Valley, I can say, has been essentially destroyed by limestone extraction and the pollution produced by burning it to make it into a salable product--that and the similar responses to the issue of big dams, taking electricity out. In the case of India there are no plans for the electricity to go to the Himalayas, it's all going to Delhi, Lucknow and these places. And no plans to employ Garhwalis even in the building of it, because Garhwalis may make trouble

because they have networks there and they have concerns. So instead labor crews are recruited out of Bihar, U.P., and Rajasthan. So that's been my most recent interest.

Naomi Bishop

Thank you all for your wonderfully diverse recollections and comments on the state of Himalayan studies. We will now throw open the panel to questions or comments from the audience.

Beatrice Miller

My name is Beatrice Miller. I don't know how many of the people here actually know me. My husband and I, like some others on the panel, got to India in 1953 by taking a forty-nine-day freighter from Seattle by way of the Philippines, Madras, Dacca, and finally winding up in Calcutta, on our way, as pure innocents, up to the hills. I say "pure innocents" because we were approaching the Tibetan populations of Northern India from the standpoint of having been thoroughly immersed in China. My affiliation with India, like Gerry's and some of the others, was that I had been member of the India Independence League before World War II and during WWII, and my husband, Robert Miller, had been very much interested in China. And as we started school as a married couple at Michigan, they didn't know anything about India but they did have Chinese studies. We had a professor who said, "Take Oriental Civilizations." We took Oriental Civilizations because he was telling us what to do (since we had never been in this situation before). We had one professor who was a geographer who headed the Japan program. He suggested that we ought to work on Japan studies, at which point we said "no way." We had been "left of center"--very left of center, left of the C.P. also--during the period of the war and before the war, and Japan just was not on our docket. Norman Brown with whom we studied at the First Indic Institute Summer said: Southeast Asia. So we wrote to Cornell and we wrote to the University of Washington. Cornell never answered us--Lauriston Sharp was off on a fieldtrip or something. We got an answer from University of Washington, saying, "Yes, you can do Southeast Asia here." So with our Hindi and this very thorough grounding in classical newspaper modern Chinese, we went to the University of Washington and discovered--whoops, they had discarded Southeast Asia and instead they were thinking about Central Asia. I was feeling very miffed and said I wasn't going any farther north than the northern extent of Indian influence, and not knowing anything, I assumed Tibet was the best place to go. Besides, a Japan professor had suggested that with my interest in India and my husband's in China, we meet in Tibet every ten years!

Anyhow, we ended up in India in 1953 as Fellows of the Ford Foundation. Our professors at Washington were good German scholars who wanted us to do our

Ph.D. in the library at Seattle, and we had been denounced as rogue elephants because we had elements in the Anthro Department telling us, "Do field work!" So we went into the field. We stopped off in Calcutta for a few months and worked through the holdings of the Royal Asiatic Society, then the Asiatic Society of Bengal, and the museum in Calcutta. Guha was in charge then and he said, "Why don't you go to Tripura?" And we said, "No, that's not the kind of Buddhists we're interested in. We are not interested in them as Buddhists, we are interested in this China-Tibet connection." So we wound up in Darjeeling. I guess we got to Darjeeling either shortly before or shortly after Tenzing (Norgay) had first come back as a hero. I was intrigued with Jim's suggestion that he knew of no Sherpa who made a distinction between who was and who was not Sherpa. At that time, in Darjeeling, by God that was a distinction, and if you were a Khumbu-wa, you made sure that everybody knew you were a Khumbu-wa, not Solu, not Yermu (Yolmo). And there was this whole business of how you could tell a Yolmo-wa or Kagate from a Solu or Khumbu Sherpa. So, it was really very intriguing--it was a case of examining women's ears, examining their nose to see if they were perforated or not and the size of the perforations. We were told that you could distinguish between the more Nepalized populations--the lower altitude populations--because the women had more frequently adopted the Nepali heavy jewelry and as you went into the more Tibetanized categories and the Khumbu Sherpa, you'd find the houses got bigger and the jewelry got smaller.

Arnico Panday

This is just a brief response to the last panelist's remarks about the differences between Arun and Tehri, and why in Nepal there seemed to be big opposition to the Arun project without a big organized social movement like the Chipko movement.

Gerald Berreman

No, the opposition to the Arun Dam and to the Tehri Dam are very similar, but different from the opposition to deforestation.

Arnico Panday

The Arun opposition was mostly city-based; the local people around the dam seemed to support the project for the employment and road that it would bring to the area. And as for local movements with deforestation, I think that there are a lot in Nepal, they just haven't received world-wide press coverage. I know personally of villages I have visited where the local people shut down a distillery or a cheese factory that were the only source of employment in the village but were destroying the forest. The villagers just got together and shut it down. Or even getting into trouble with the Nepali army that was cutting down the forest.

Gerald Berreman

There's a long history of indigenous opposition to deforestation; see Ramachandra Guha's book, *The Unquiet Woods*, that's referring to India now, to say that the contemporary movements like Chipko are by no means unique in the history. And it goes way back in India--of course there you had the additional feature of external colonial presence which people could focus their attention on. And I think that no doubt there are similar movements in Nepal--I am not saying there aren't. But the very highly organized Chipko movement--the two branches of it, one of them organized around Siliari (Garhwal) and the other one in British Garhwal--have I think been of a different order than these small-scale resistances. But it doesn't mean there isn't resistance and that people don't recognize the threats. When you mentioned the cheese factory and the distillery--this is one of the big differences I see between the two areas--that in India the destruction of the forests is very clearly being done by massive deforestation, by commercial interests--they destroy on a massive scale, like in the Pacific Northwest here and parts of California. Whereas in Nepal, except fairly near to Kathmandu, you don't have this kind of commercial deforestation in the Himalayas themselves and I think wherever you get an external force (I assume the cheese factories and distilleries are external), then you are likely to get opposition. But if it's the more subtle factors that Jack Ives and others have talked about--where it is the natural movements in the mountains, the natural erosion that takes place from the rivers for example because they are young mountains and they are still rising and very steep--where it's not perceived in other words, as an outside exploitation of our forest then you don't get the responses. That's true in India too.

Audience member

Several of these speakers have discussed issues that were important 20 or 25 years ago, and some of these issues remain or have taken different terms as Professor Berreman described about Chipko movement--why is it in India and there is no similar movement in Nepal in spite of the fact that deforestation might be more in Nepal in recent years. I would like to comment on three or four things that have been happening in Nepal, which have to do with post-1990: we have full democracy now and there is ethnic polarization by certain groups and assertion of identity by certain ethnic groups which were thought to be backward. I will give three examples: one is boycott Dassai, even by groups which were previously observing it; another one is a movement against Sanskrit about which Professor Vajracharya touched on (a Buddhist scholar reading a Vedic text); and third is a movement against the supposed disproportionate domination of Brahmins in the economical and political life of Nepal. And there have been books, like the one by Dor Bahadur Bista, *Fatalism and Development*, which has become a

kind of bible--all the development experts read it. And recently I read a book published in Stuttgart that was a study of ethnology in Nepal, and it talks about enslavement of the lower caste people and tribal people by the higher class people. What I want to say is that this is an interesting field for further anthropological research, and I don't know how objective so far anthropologists have been in this regard--I don't know. I think this is one area which needs to be studied in detail.

Anne Sweetser

I am struck by several of your comments. I worked in Kadan Valley in Pakistan which is still the Himalaya. In 1992 a very severe flood there picked up a lot of trees that had been cut on land still completely controlled by the landlords. Trunks came down and knocked out roads in addition to just general land slippage and so on. The cutting there is done largely for the benefit of a very small percentage of the population and is being converted into political capital. This seems to be a contrasting example.

Audience Member

I have a question for Dr. Berreman. It is remarkable I think--the grassroots level movement regarding environmental protection in Nepal. Recently the Godavari Marble Factory in Lalitpur district near to Kathmandu was the focus of such a movement. A grassroots level movement took place in opposition and the government did not listen to anything. The local people along with public interest lawyers filed a case in the Supreme Court of Nepal against the government. The Godavari Marble Factory was for commercial purposes. The revenue that the factory was delivering to the government was just 20,000 rupees a year, while they were earning a *krone* of rupees a year so it was a very commercial purpose. And of course there are issues regarding employment and also money influence. The Supreme Court decided that the GMF is running legally. And unfortunately I, a public interest lawyer, pleaded on behalf of the local people. So that is one example of the local people forming grassroots protests. The government is aware that these kinds of cases will have some impact on the future.

Another question for Professor Ives: How are the interests of Nepal-like countries, or Nepal in particular, represented in those international forums on environmental development issues? It seems to me that the interests of Nepal-like countries would be quite different from countries like India or China?

Jack Ives

I am glad to hear that question because it is something that concerns me. There is not adequate representation. There is a lot of concern being expressed. Three years ago a group of people through the Mountain Institute in West Virginia organized an

international forum that was held in Lima. And we invited a diverse group of representatives from NGOs all over the world--we had about 120 people there. So countries like Ecuador, Bulgaria, and Nepal were represented, but the problem is who represents them--they are not representative of those countries. And at least this led to the beginnings of the creation of something we referred to as the Mountain Forum. This is on-going; it is an email network and yet how do villagers the other side of the Himalaya communicate by email? And these very big problems will be discussed in Kathmandu next month with pressure from the Swiss Development Corporation. I am personally hoping that there will be much improved communication between relatively isolated groups, whether they are in Southern Chile or in Ecuador or in Bhutan. But we have a lot of work and thinking that needs to go into it and I would urge anyone in the room who wants to take up on that to contact the Mountain Forum. I don't have the email address but I am sure it is easily available. And keep in touch with it and see how it develops. And state your opinions very strongly.

Gautam Vajracharya

In response to Prakash, I am quite familiar with the movement to eliminate Dassai. Dassai is a celebration of autumn: it is not Hindu, it is not Indian, it is not Nepali. Monsoon is over, harvest is ready and we are happy and celebrate Dassai. And now there is the movement that says, "I am not Hindu, I don't need Dassai bidaa." It is really interesting to me. I think this kind of movement begins when the British began to study South Asian studies, classifying things. These are Hindu, these are the Buddhist. These are Hindu gods. This is caste. This is Nepali. This is India. But if you study South Asia with the seasons and monsoon, I do not see much difference between Hindu, Buddhists or India/ Nepal/ Bangladesh distinctions.

Naomi Bishop

Thank you. On that note, I would like to thank everyone for coming. We'll see you next year.

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Vajracharya, Gautam. 1997. *The Adaptation of Monsoonal Culture by Rgvedic Aryans: A Further Study of the Frog Hymn*. *Electronic Journal of Vedic Studies* 3: 2. To subscribe write to the editor, Professor Michael Witzel at witzel@fas.harvard.edu.

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