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Deepak Shimkhada, Nepal: Nostalgia and Modernity. Reviewed by Michael Baltutis

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manuscripts that provide a rare insight into early Sikkim. The chapter begins with a critical analysis of the narrative around the important *Lho Mon Gtsong gsum* Agreement, which is revealing of the precarious balance between Phun tsogs rnam rgyal and other indigenous Lepcha and Limbu leaders. The systematic analysis of the Agreement highlights the prevalence of animosity, war, and turbulence as opposed to the dominant local narratives of mutual recognition and submission of the Lepchas and Limbu groups to the rule of the Namgyal dynasty. The other manuscript that is analysed in detail is a census of the Lepcha and Limbu population which is revealing of the administrative system under Phun tsogs rnam rgyal. The final two chapters are dedicated to the construction of historical narratives of Sikkim as a result of and in response to external influences. These chapters draw a direct relationship between these narratives and the construction of Sikkimese history, especially in the early nineteenth and twentieth centuries, which saw the increasing importance of the British colonizers in the region who then imposed their own interpretation of the history of the region.

The political significance of religious and local narratives and their influence on the construction of Sikkimese history are themes that are well inter-woven throughout the book and shed light on prevailing socio-political structures in Sikkim and Tibet. For example, while the opening of the hidden land/Sikkim has an intrinsic religious intent and meaning, Mullard locates this explanation against the turbulent political situation in Tibet and the neighbouring regions, and argues that Sikkim could have been a literal hidden land for those escaping political or religious persecution in Tibet.

The monograph has been published as a part of Brill's Tibetan Studies Library series and makes extensive use of Tibetan terminology, literary, and religious traditions, which might be unfamiliar to those readers unacquainted with Tibetan texts and cultural contexts. Mullard, however, provides adequate references and explanations that help navigate through the chapters and the book will resonate with audiences interested in the history, people, and politics of Sikkim as well as those of Tibet, Bhutan, and even Nepal. As a process, state formation may not always follow a linear, predetermined pattern or may not be interpreted or recorded as chronological, historical data; instead, they might be preserved as historical narrative, as in the case of Sikkim, open to changes and biases. Thus, the book challenges the imposition of a universal, Eurocentric notion of state formation by highlighting the various forms and processes that underlie it, thereby widening its appeal to an audience beyond those interested in Himalayan studies.

The absence of archaeological and other physical evidence and the diversity of important dates and events within the documentary evidence exposes the book to the risk of conjecture and extrapolation. However, using multiple sources of information and the intensive research of texts, Mullard clearly and carefully steers the book away from such pitfalls thereby creating a body of work that will

have extensive influence on research on Sikkim.

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NEPAL: NOSTALGIA AND MODERNITY

BY DEEPAK SHIMKHADA, ED.

Mumbai: Marg, 2012. 128 pp. \$68.00.
ISBN 978-9380581088.

REVIEWED BY MICHAEL BALTUTIS

Recent tumultuous political events in Nepal, resulting in the ending of the Shah dynasty's 240-year reign, have generated a wealth of scholarship throughout the social sciences, especially in anthropology, political science, and religious studies. The book under review, dealing with the visual and performative traditions of contemporary Nepal, implicitly places itself within this wave of scholarship. One of the goals that this scholarship has in common – and, further, has in common with local authors, leaders, and politicians – is the establishment of an elusive “new Nepal” that successfully negotiates Nepal's traditions with the elements of modernity that have rapidly transformed the nation and its cultures. Hence this volume's subtitle of “Nostalgia and Modernity.”

As a Marg publication whose General Editor is the eminent art historian, Pratapaditya Pal, the volume's focus on the arts of Nepal (more specifically, on the arts of the urban Kathmandu Valley, the traditional home of the Newar people and the traditional geographic referent of this term) has resulted in a beautiful edited volume/coffee-table book that, though of only 128 pages, contains over 120 glossy color photos. Distinguishing itself from standard coffee-table books, however, are the volume's eleven essays (plus the editor's introduction), written by prominent authors, scholars, and artists from the US, Europe, and South Asia. These eleven essays are divided into three sections: Architecture, Visual Arts, and Performances and Religious Traditions. Each essay, approximately ten pages in length, handles one example of a changing artistic form in Nepal in its respective category.

More, however, than a series of “salvage ethnographies” about a country and its traditional peoples being subject to forces of modernity, the essays in this volume present the tensions felt, the adaptations made, and the productive relationships forged among the individual architects, artists, and ritualists who are actively negotiating with these forces. Though many of these essays include Westerners as agents of

artistic modernity, such influences are the dominant factor in only a few of these essays.

Though space does not allow me to review each of these eleven essays, the shape of the volume can be gleaned from a representative essay from each of the volume's three sections. Niels Gutschow, in the volume's first essay, "Architecture: The Quest for Nepaleseness," outlines the various ways that architecture displays the intertwining of nostalgia, politics, and technology. The construction of large-scale temples, coronation platforms, and domestic spaces in the Valley reflects not only changing aesthetic tastes but also a desire for a "Nepaleseness" that is free of British and Indian influences; construction and re-modeling projects often project a further "Newarization" that aims to connect contemporary buildings with the most traditional forms of Nepalese architecture in the Valley, those constructed by members of the local Newar ethnic group (23). The two subsequent essays in this section – by Weiler and Hegewald – respectively detail the use of neo-classical themes in architecture and the pools, baths and water-spouts that constitute the Valley's aquatic architecture.

Among the essays in the second section, Ani Kasten's "The Potters of Thimi: Village Ceramic Traditions in Flux" presents one of the volume's more unique perspective on Nepal's changing artistic traditions. A ceramics artist by trade, Kasten describes the adaptations made by the Prajapati potters of Thimi, the Valley's fourth-largest city, as they attempt to maintain their traditional artistic forms in a world increasingly attracted to mass-produced household items created on foreign assembly lines. Outlining the recent history of these changes, beginning with the German-initiated Ceramics Promotion Project of Nepal in the early 1980s, Kasten describes her own work in establishing the Thimi Ceramics Stoneware Project in 2001, whose main goal was "to create new, high-quality handmade wares using a combination of modern and traditional methods" (89). The other three essays in this section – by Alsop, Bangdel and Harper – hang together quite nicely as they focus on three different aspects of the use of traditional religious imagery in modern Nepalese art.

In the third section, Miranda Shaw's essay, "Tantric Buddhist Dance of Nepal: From the Temple to the Stage and Back," identifies the various strategies utilized by Nepalese performers of Charya Nritya to keep alive the struggling performative tradition of tantric dance. Until recently a private tradition requiring initiation, Buddhist tantric dance has expanded beyond its traditional geographical, caste-based, and religious boundaries. Similar to the architectural trends described by Gutschow, this Vajrayana Buddhist system of "offering, devotion, and celebration" has become transformed into an art form that is transcending its Newar origins and private contexts as it is performed by non-Newars at hotels and as part of tourist programmes throughout Kathmandu. (103). The volume concludes with three additional essays – by Rajamajhi, Ward and Shimkhada – on the changing roles of street theatre, of Shiva and his renunciate followers at the

burning grounds of Pashupati, and of the living goddess, Kumari.

This book is clearly not a traditional edited volume: the photographs lavishly detailing the many forms of Nepalese art and performance are just as important as the essays they accompany. After thumbing through the volume, one might assert that it is actually the essays that accompany the photographs, rather than the other way around! The book's visual emphasis allows for an expansive audience, including not just scholars of South Asia, but also undergraduate students and an interested general public.

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CARDAMOM AND CLASS: A LIMBU VILLAGE AND ITS EXTENSIONS IN EAST NEPAL

BY IAN CARLOS FITZPATRICK

Kathmandu: Vajra Publications, 2011. 321pp.
ISBN 978-9937506663.

REVIEWED BY T. B. SUBBA

This book has been hailed by Professor David Gellner of Oxford University, who was the principal supervisor of the author's doctoral research, as a major ethnographic work along the lines of Lionel Caplan's *Land and Social Change in East Nepal* (1970) and Philippe Sagant's *The Dozing Shaman* (1996). In his preface to the book, Professor Gellner writes that "The Limbus are lucky to have attracted an ethnographer with such linguistic skills" as Ian Fitzpatrick. While I agree with Professor Gellner on the first point, I find it a little difficult to agree with him about the linguistic skills of the author, which I explain a little later. If I were the author's supervisor, I would still feel equally proud of the work as his supervisor apparently is.

Cardamom and Class has six chapters excluding the introduction and conclusion. The first chapter sets the theoretical context of the study in what the author calls "anthropological political economy." I think this is a very well researched chapter that shows the depth of Fitzpatrick's understanding of the theories of political economy and modes of production. The second chapter provides the historical context of Limbus and the communal ownership of their lands called *kipat*. The third chapter is on Mamangkhe