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## Book Reviews

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## VIII. BOOK REVIEWS

### **\*A Short Review of Recent Contributions to High Altitude Research and of a New Journal**

Centre National de la Recherche Scientifique, Editions du  
1981 L'homme et son environnement à haute altitude (Environmental and  
human population problems at high altitude)  
Proceedings of a seminar jointly sponsored by the Centre National de la  
Recherche Scientifique and the U.S. National Science Foundation, Paris,  
October 1980. Meudon-Bellevue: Centre regional de publications du  
C.N.R.S., G. RE. C.O. Himalaya Karakorum. Cahiers Népalais. 163pp.,  
figures, charts, illus., 18 articles in English, 7 in French.

Mountain Research and Development, Vol. I, No. 1, May 1981. Published by the United  
Nations University and the International Mountain Society, with support from  
UNESCO, Paris and Arbeitsgemeinschaft für Vergleichende Hochgebirgsforschung,  
Munich. Editor: Jack D. Ives.

Review by: Donald A. Messerschmidt  
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99164

The decade of the 1970s was an active one for high altitude and mountain research in the Himalayas, as well as other mountainous regions of the world. Mountain research activity has heightened awareness of the complex problems faced by human populations and has increased appreciation for the multiple scientific and human issues of mountain environments, especially in the areas of ecology, geomorphology, anthropology, health, agriculture, resource management, etc. One of the most important spinoffs of this research has been an increase in publications on the subject. In an earlier bulletin several mid-1970s seminars and publications on the topic of mountains were reviewed in an article by Charles Bailey (Nepal Studies Association Bulletin, 1978, Nos. 16/17:13-32). In the present article, I wish to review two very recent publications. One is the proceedings of a joint U.S./French seminar held in Paris in October 1980. The other is a new journal for mountain scholars. Most of my remarks will be limited to those aspects of each publication that deal with the greater Himalayan region.

Environmental and Human Population Problems at High Altitude is one in the series from France, Cahiers Népalais, which now numbers over a dozen important titles. This publication is prepared under the editorial supervision of Corneille Jest and Paul Baker. The volume is divided into four sections: (1) Problems of natural environment, (2) Problems of environmental effects on human biology, (3) Problems of human socio-cultural interaction with the natural environment, and (4) Research strategies and problems of economic development. The participants to the seminar represented a truly international and multi-disciplinary selection, including scholars from a variety of countries and regions, with expertise in both the natural and the social sciences. A number of the pieces cover topics germane to mountain ecosystems and socio-systems worldwide. Others are country or region specific.

Ten articles deal all or in part with the greater Himalayan region (Nepal and Tibet). I list them here by author and title (and pages) for convenience:

J. F. Dobremez, "La haute altitude: point de vue d'un écologiste" (23-26), J. Ives, "The natural environment and human use problems in Nepal" (27-32), S. T. Hu, "Physiological comparison of the Tibetan (Tsan) highlanders and the Han lowlanders at moderate and great altitudes" (47-48), C. M. Beall, "Some aspects of the study of physical growth at high altitudes in Asia" (49-54), J. Raynaud, et al, "Electrocardiographic observation in high altitude residents of Nepal and Bolivia" (65-72), A. R. Frisancho, "Ecological interpretation of postnatal growth at high altitude" (a review of cross-sectional and longitudinal studies, Himalayan and others) (89-93), F. Meyer, "Populations de haute altitude et santé en Himalaya" (97-100), M. C. Goldstein, "The transformation of the social matrix of Tibetan populations in the high Himalaya" (101-106), C. Jest, "Les populations himalayennes, les recherches en sciences sociales, le développement" (139-142), and W. H. Li, "A brief introduction to the ecological research on the Qinghai-Xizang (Tibet) plateau by Chinese scientists" (143-146).

Many of the other articles deal with Andean mountain systems and populations. Given the similarities between mountain regions around the world, all of the articles, regional and general alike, are important for the multidisciplinary perspectives that they provide on issues and problems of high altitude environment and adaptation.

A major weakness is the shortness of the contributions, explained in the Preface as deliberate condensations from longer seminar papers. It is hoped that these papers will appear quickly in their longer and more detailed forms in journals and books elsewhere. There is also some problem with editing copy, for there are many awkward typographical errors throughout. Despite these minor limitations, the volume is an important document in the advancement of mountain and high altitude research, and will be of particular interest to specialists and to science librarians.

The publication is available from the Centre National de la Recherche Scientifique, Groupement de Recherches Coordonnées Himalaya Karakorum, 1 Place Aristide-Briand, 92190 Meudon, France (no price given).

The new journal Mountain Research and Development is a much needed and long awaited contribution to mountain systems scholarship that "will provide a means of focusing world-wide attention on mountain environmental problems and an international forum for communication and collaboration" according to the editor, Jack Ives. With remarkable speed and resourcefulness the first volume appeared in May 1981, with seven major articles, book reviews, and other information of special interest to mountain scholars.

It is truly interdisciplinary and international. Two articles in the first issue deal with the Himalayan region: M. C. Goldstein's "High-altitude Tibetan populations in the remote Himalaya: social transformation and its demographic, economic, and ecological consequences" (5-18) and D. H. S. Chang's "The vegetation zonation of the Tibetan plateau" (29-48). (Goldstein's piece is the longer version of the seminar paper published in the French volume, reviewed above.) The journal is nicely illustrated with photographs and graphics that are important counterpoints to many of the technical papers. The first issue came complete

with two drop-out maps (the Simen Mountains of Ethiopia: Trekking Map, and the Combined Mountain Geomorphic Hazards: Monarch Lake, Colorado).

Future issues will have Himalayan pieces by K. Johnson, A. Olson and S. Manandhar, "Environmental knowledge and response to natural hazards in mountainous Nepal"; N. Caine and P. K. Mool, "Channel geometry and flow conditions along two small mountain streams in the Middle Hills, Nepal"; C. Jest and J. A. Stein, "Preliminary notes and observations on development in the Bumthang area, Bhutan"; and J. Ai-Liang, "Temperature and vegetation inversions in Xishuangbanna, Yunnan."

Mountain Research and Development is an urgently needed and very welcome journal. It is a fully professional publication and it adds immensely to the coordination and communication of mountain research scholarship internationally. It should be on the standard subscription lists of every specialist in mountain studies, and in every major social science and natural science library.

The International Mountain Society, its sponsor, is a new organization dedicated "to strive for a better balance between mountain environment, development of resources, and the well-being of mountain peoples." Its President is Jack Ives, and its Vice-President is the Himalayan anthropologist, Corneille Jest.

Further information about the society and about subscription or contribution to the journal may be obtained by writing directly to the Editor, Mountain Research and Development, Box 3148, Boulder, CO 80307. Subscription rates are \$25.00 U.S. for individuals; \$18.00 U.S. for students (under age 25); and \$45.00 U.S. per annum for institutions and libraries. Single issues are available for \$9.00 U.S. each.