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II. RESEARCH PROPOSALS, PROJECTS, REPORTS, AND PAPER ABSTRACTS

***Research Projects Now Underway by Nepalese Scholars at the Research Centre for Nepalese and Asian Studies, Tribhuvan University (courtesy of Dr. Ramawatar Yadav, Dep. Director, CNAS)**

- Bajracharya, D.
Mallakalin Shastriya Nritya Tatha Natak.
(Classical Dance and Drama of Malla Period)
- Bajracharya, D. B
Documents of Shaha Period.
- Bandhu, C. M.
Nepali Bhasa Ma Vakya Mishran Ko Prakriya.
(A Study on Nepali Syntax)
- Bhatta, G.
China and Four Modernization.
- Dhimal, B. M.
Cultural Study of Dhimals.
- Dhungel, B.
Population Resources and Social Structure.
Education, Work and Fertility: A Study of the Working Women in Nepal.
- Gupta, B.
Ethnological Studies of the Tharus of Eastern Nepal.
- Khanal, R.
Nepal's Relation with China 1960-80.
- Kuwar, R.
Cultural Study of Tekha.
- Majapuria, T. C.
Religious Animals in Hinduism and Buddhism.
- Manandhar, T. R.
Nepal-Tibet Conflicts.
- Mishra, C.
Population Ecology and Social Structure.
- Nepal, G. M.
Documents Related to Nepal and China.
- Pradhan, A. P.
Buddha's System of Meditation.
- Pradhan, J. M.
Ganesh of Nepal: Scientific and Cultural Background.

Rajaure, D.

Traditional Medical Practices among the Tharus.

Sharma, P. R.

Social History of Nepal (from the earliest period to the end of the Rama rule).

Shrestha, D. K.

China's Foreign Policy Since 1949.

Stiller, L. F.

Social Awareness Spin Off of the Small Farmer's Programme.

Tondon, G.

Ganesh Image in Kathmandu Valley.

Tuladhar, N. M.

Survey of the Use of Nepali Language in the Communities of Non-Native Speakers of Nepal.

***Foreign Researchers Affiliated with the Research Centre for Nepalese and Asian Studies and Their Research Topics, 1980-1981 (courtesy of Dr. Ramawatar Yadav, Dep. Director, CNAS)**

Blackwood, Peter Maurice (University of Adelaide)

Household Economy in a Multi-Ethnic Rural Village Community.

Chase, Judith Conant (University of Colorado)

Documentation of the Folk Arts of Nepalese Village.

Connell, Monica Bridget (Oxford University)

In-Depth Anthropological Study of a Trading Community in the Chaudabise DARA Region of Jumla.

Frank, Walter Adolf (Zentralasioneamina, University of Bonn)

Attempts at an Ethnographic Survey of Nepal Part II Western Region Dhaulagiri and Lumbini.

Fricke, Thomas Earl (University of Wisconsin, Madison)

Socioeconomic Correlating of Fertility Behavior Among the Kham Magar of North West Nepal.

Gombo, Ugen (State University of New York)

Tibetan Refugees in the Kathmandu Valley: A Study in Change and Persistence and the Adaptation of a Population in Exile.

Jackman, Duncan H. (The Queen's University of Belfast)

An Ethnomusicological Study of Music Culture of the Kathmandu Valley.

Kohn, Richard J. (University of Wisconsin, Madison)

Temporary Art in Buddhist Community of Nepal.

- Leiden, Albertus W. Van Den Hock (State University of Holland)
The Religious, Social and Political Significance of the Goddess Kali (Devi Durga) in Hindu-Buddhist Society.
- McDonough, Christian (Oxford University, Institute of Social Anthropology)
A Socio-Economic Study of the Tharu of Western Nepal in the Context of National Development Policies.
- McHugh, Ernestine Louise (University of California, San Diego)
The Communication of Emotional Experience.
- Novak, Charles Michael (Norapa Institute)
Nepal's Licchavi Inscriptions and Buddhism (ca. 500-700 AD).
- Quigley, Declan (London School of Economics)
The Social and Economic Organization of Newar Traders in the Kathmandu Valley.
- Sicroff, Seth Ellis (Harvard University)
Oral Tradition Literature of the Solokhumbu Region of Nepal: Implications for the Study of Western Medieval Literature.
- Spengen, Van Wim (Free University, Amsterdam, Netherlands)
A Study of Manang Trade Patterns.
- Thornton, Lewis Todd (Columbia University)
A Study of New Lay Buddhism.
- Overseas Field Research, Ministry of Education, Science and Culture, Japan
The Anthropological and Linguistic Study of National Integration in Nepal.
Hajimi Kitamura (Project Chief)
Shigeru Iijima
Yoshio Nishi
Hiroshi Ishi
Yuji Yamamoto
Yasuhiko Nagano

***Study of Ayurvedic Medicine in Kathmandu**

Researcher: Maureen Durkin-Longley (University of Wisconsin, Madison)

Project:

Maureen Durkin-Longley is concluding an ethnographic study of ayurvedic medicine based on twelve months of research among vaidyas (ayurvedic physicians) and their clients in Kathmandu. The study seeks to interpret beliefs used in defining, experiencing and curing illness and their relation to the literate ayurvedic tradition, to other aspects of Nepalese culture and society, and to behavior patterns in resort to ayurvedic healers.

Several varieties of vaidyas, each with unique backgrounds, beliefs, practices and clientele, are being documented. The findings show that males and females of all

ages and most of Nepal's ethnic, socioeconomic and educational divisions are well represented among those who resort to ayurvedic health care in Kathmandu and many come from regions of the country outside Kathmandu. Ayurveda in Kathmandu is practiced within the context of a plural health care system where patients choose from a variety of therapeutic options and frequently seek care from more than one therapist during the course of a single illness. Expressed beliefs about the causes and treatment of illnesses are flexible and subject to modification as patients move from one type of healer to another. In general, vaidyas are well-known and highly sought for their treatment of hepatitis and do not see cases demanding urgent or first aid care. Otherwise the distribution of cases they treat roughly mirrors that of cases brought to allopathic settings in Nepal. Their diagnoses and methods of therapy differ from those encountered by patients in allopathic treatment centers and derive their meanings from ayurvedic concepts familiar to most individuals raised in Nepalese culture. The two systems — ayurveda and allopathy — mutually influence each other in Kathmandu as vaidyas employ modern diagnostic methods and disease terms and foreign-trained doctors modify advice to make sense within the ayurvedic framework and prescribe certain ayurvedic drugs which have no allopathic counterparts.

In addition to ethnographic data, she collected botanical voucher specimens and market samples of about 200 substances used medicinally by vaidyas in Kathmandu and learned and recorded numerous formulae and methods of drug preparation.

The study was not designed to evaluate the biomedical efficacy of ayurvedic treatment. However, the findings document that ayurvedic care in Kathmandu ranges from that which effectively manages biomedical aspects of disease to that which has no discernible biomedical usefulness. They also document psychosomatic and psychosocial aspects of illness and healing in the context of Nepalese culture and raise methodological complexities and areas for further research in the subject of evaluating effectiveness.

***Thimi: Social and Economic Studies on a Newar Settlement in the Kathmandu Valley**

Researcher: Ulrike Müller (Geographisches Institut, Justus, Liebig - Universität, Giessen)

(This is a summary of a much longer report -- see "Publication News" for ordering information.)

Project:

In this study I tried to represent the Newar settlement Thimi monographically and to give a geographical statement from the genesis, the structures and functions of the settlement.

Thimi lies between the cities of Kathmandu and Bhaktapur in the centre of the Kathmandu valley, but in reference to Kathmandu it is still to be regarded as peripheral in many ways. In spite of its large number of inhabitants, its houses built very close together and its urban physiognomy, seen structurally and functionally, Thimi is a village. Thimi was already mentioned in reports and inscriptions from the Licchavi Period (5th-8th century AD) by the name Madhyapurna.

If one leaves aside certain special characteristics, e.g., the typical inner-courtyards and the architectural style of the Newar house, the outline and the functional structure of the settlement is modelled on the traditional "Indian city" (Niemeier, 1961). Not only the outline of the settlement, but also the groundplan and the form of usage of the Newar house are expressions of religious ideas and rules of Newar caste society.

An exceptionally complicated caste system, which nowadays embraces 26 castes, has developed since the 14th century, because of the specific history of the Kathmandu valley and especially because of the fact that Buddhists and Hindus live there side by side. Only 15 of these 26 castes exist in Thimi itself. The outcasts are completely absent. In comparison with the Kathmandu valley as a whole, it can also be seen that the Shrestha and Kuma are overproportionately represented in the settlement. The caste structure of Newar society is reflected in the tendency of the various groups to keep themselves spatially apart and thus also in the appearance of the settlement. Nowadays signs of this structure breaking up are only recognisable in the area around the bazaar road.

The social position of the individual is revealed by his social interactions, which are in turn governed by ritual rights and duties. The web of relationships within and between the various castes holds Newar society together. Even the underprivileged groups of the impure and low castes are fully integrated into the social system both as the people who do important jobs and as participants at the numerous religious feasts. In this context they are not representative of marginal groups. The patrilinear joint family guarantees each member considerable social and economic security. At the same time it reproduces the norms of caste structure in its patriarchal structure. These structures are made even stronger by the supraregional organisation of relatives, the Dewali-guthis. Guthis, whose members are recruited from one single caste or who have communal interests beyond caste boundaries, are inside regulators of village society and an important self-help organisation.

When the Panchayat system was introduced, Thimi too became involved in the tension surrounding policies which were adjusted to the interests of the metropolis and thus lost autonomy. The village authorities, who have only few rights, function extremely ineffectively. The stated aim of the Panchayat policies, the realisation of the equality concept for all Nepalese citizens, has not been able to take hold in Thimi so far. Just as before, the social structure is influenced by the ever-present caste system.

The most important economic factor in Thimi is agriculture. The very favourable natural environment makes a very intensive and productive use of land possible. Except for a few cases, nearly all inhabitants have something to do with agriculture, either as full-time, part-time or supplementary farmers or as lessors. The army of workers which is available for farming makes a very labour intensive type of production possible. Even so, the demands of busy periods can only be met with the help of day-labourers, usually Tamangs. The possession and ownership situation in Thimi is relatively well balanced for Nepalese standards, because of the large number of small farmers, the lack of really great land owners and the low percentage of people who own no land at all. Nevertheless, the priority of the higher castes and the great disadvantages of the lower castes are revealed here too. Members of the priest castes are lessors, whereas members of the lower and

impure castes are usually tenants who own no land. The primary aim of production of the farms is self-sufficiency. Besides the farms which cultivate purely for self-sufficiency and usually exist side-by-side with a non-agricultural source of income, there are also a number of mixed-farms, which grow cash-crops all year round. The irrigation situation in Thimi normally allows the harvesting of at least two crops a year. The farmland is almost completely taken up by wet-rice in summer, which is grown alternately with crops of wheat, potatoes or vegetables. Agricultural activities can be carried out by members of all castes except for priests. On the other hand, other occupations are bound up with the caste.

The only craft in Thimi which is of supraregional importance is pottery. Using relatively simple techniques, many different kinds of clay goods are manufactured in more than 500 workshops and sold far beyond the boundaries of the Kathmandu valley. As almost all the potters are also farmers, their work is influenced substantially by the seasonal farming cycles.

Thimi is well provided for with shops and tea-rooms, which correspond in size and furnishing to the local standard. Its market is of no supraregional importance. The labour market is confined to jobs in agriculture, crafts or retailing. The few jobs in public service are mostly occupied by outsiders. Those who have had higher education will find no adequate jobs in Thimi.

Children and young people have the chance to go to the local primary and secondary schools. Nevertheless, not nearly all of the children of school age go to school. A satisfactory education often cannot be had because of economic and social difficulties. The health situation amongst the population is very bad, because of the bad conditions of hygiene and the totally inadequate medical service. The supply of drinking water in Thimi is very problematic especially during the dry season in winter. Besides, water from the wells and springs and even from the pipe lines is of bad quality. As there is no sewerage, the health risk due to pollution by faeces is very high. Thimi is connected to Kathmandu and Bhaktapur by roads, which are passable all year round, and by public transport, which is quick and cheap.

Finally, besides the short recapitulation of the monographic description, I shall attempt to take up those questions which, as an integral part of a problems oriented summary, are crucial for an understanding of the current social and economic situation and also in respect of further development of Thimi.

Only Newar live in Thimi. Nevertheless, even the inhabitants of Thimi are involved in the ethnic tension of the Kathmandu valley. The superimposition of the foreign, rural-aristocratic Gurkhas as an upper class hit the social and economic position of the Newars sensitively. However, they were not degraded by the conquerors to being the lowest social group in the reorganized society, but became the middle class, which the conquerors themselves did not have. From this time on, the Newars had no way of entering the political and economic elite, which is nowadays mostly made up of Chetris, Thakuris and Brahmins. The small farmers, craftsmen and merchants in Thimi are classified as members of the middle class in Nepalese society. Locally, the traditional Newar social structure exists with its pronounced caste hierarchy but these social differences are levelled off in outside contacts.

As always, the caste system determines the socio-economic situation in Thimi, although it was officially abolished in 1963. Even today membership of a certain caste decides about occupation, status, mode of life and economic position of the individual to a great extent. The caste system stabilises the unequal possession and ownership relations, necessitates the existence of underprivileged groups (like for example the low and impure castes) and prevents almost completely any social mobility. On the one hand, the present political system is interested in preserving these structures, which do not question the balance of power, despite of all superficial laws. On the other hand, the further development of the country demands a mobile population which is willing, for example, to take up new occupations and to work together beyond caste barriers. The first steps towards a social change would be conceivable if a change were made in the existing economic situation, e.g., if ownership of land were reorganised as part of a new land reform. Each step towards a break-up of the pre-industrial productivity relationships also means a loosening-up of the rigid occupational caste system in favour of economic flexibility. The modest beginning of such a development can already be seen, e.g., in the bazaar area of Thimi in the dissolution of the spatial caste structure for functional reasons.

Not only the caste system but also the joint family is regarded by younger people as an obstacle to their personal development and also in the way of any kind of social change. Absolute recognition of authority and the duty to obey inside and outside the family narrows down individual freedom drastically (e.g., in choosing an occupation or a marriage partner, etc.). An expression of this socialisation lies in the almost unresisting recognition of a foreign ruler in the form of the Nepalese Royal family and the readiness to conform completely to caste regulations. Besides the social security which it gives to each individual, the stability of the joint family, which can be seen in Thimi even today, is based very much on its multifunctional economic structure, which provides great security.

The guthi organisations have lost importance as traditional social regulators and institutions of self-help. The reduction of the rent on guthi land too has impaired the financial situation and thus the activities of the guthis. Besides this, the conservative contents and aims which with the precedence of the older generation nearly always prevail in the guthi councils, means that younger, more progressive forces have little room to develop. A further restriction upon the guthis can also be observed in the state controlled administrative organisation which, represented by the Village Panchayats, works very ineffectively, but considers itself as competent to fulfil the duties which were previously carried out by the guthis.

The work of the Village Panchayats is of little importance seen in front of the background of the great state i.e. Royal power, which can also be seen in Thimi. A few members of the Panchayat councils were not voted for but were appointed by higher authorities. The obligatory 'Five Year Plans' are determined by the District Panchayat and their realisation depends to a large extent upon the goodwill of the same authority, as the Village Panchayats have no own budget. It is understandable that the incentive to develop an effective, communal self-administration is minimal. Meetings of the Panchas are rarely called. They in turn do not always carry out their duties in the interest of the population. The solution of urgent problems usually does not fail because people are not conscious of these problems or because of their conservative behaviour, but because of the loss of village autonomy and the right of self-determination.

In the economic sector, Thimi was able to remain relatively autonomous. Characteristic in agriculture are the small farmers' part-time and supplementary farms, which aim at self-sufficiency in the basic foodstuffs. On extremely small farm sizes, mostly grain (rice and wheat) but also vegetables are grown with an intensity of work — similar to horticulture — which cannot be increased. As a result of the land reform, which fixed rent at an economically viable level, and because of the growing usage of means of production to increase the yields (e.g., inorganic fertilizer, improved seeds), a very high output per unit of area can be achieved. A further increase in agricultural production in the Thimi area could be possible by the development of all year round irrigated land. To do this, however, high investments of capital would be needed (e.g., for the construction of a dam), which could not be raised by the farmers themselves.

Although the crafts have to fight competition from the cheap, industrially produced imports, they are necessary for supplying the village. Pottery is of supraregional importance and also a fundamental economic factor in Thimi. The potters' workshops supply mainly the markets in the Kathmandu valley, but their market has become considerably wider since the extension of the road network. The hand-made clay goods have proved to be able to compete with the industrially manufactured goods because of the low production costs. However, a growing problem for this craft is the lack of potter's earth and the difficulties involved in getting it.

The solid and stable economic foundation of Thimi is made up of an agriculture aimed at self-sufficiency and autonomous crafts. Definite progress can be observed in the last few years, especially in agriculture but also to a lesser degree in the crafts: in agriculture a higher rate of production has been achieved by the increased usage of inorganic fertilizer and improved seeds; in the pottery an extension of the market has been brought about by better marketing and new products. Although the problem of unemployment is lessened to a great extent by the existence of the joint family, one must still presume that there is a great number of underemployed people. Inhabitants who have had a qualified education are also forced to work in Kathmandu or in other cities or to migrate completely, because they can find no suitable work in Thimi. It is only possible to create a few jobs in Thimi and then only in the non-agrarian sectors. Conceivable would be to set up small factories or manufactories where agricultural products could be further processed (e.g., a canned vegetable factory). Economic advantages for the farmers and potters could be achieved by cooperative marketing. No hopes should be pinned on tourism as a source of income, as competition from the neighbouring cities is too great and because the tourist infrastructure is concentrated almost exclusively in Kathmandu.

The little effective village administration is reflected in many ways in the public infrastructure in Thimi. For example, there is no doctor practising in Thimi itself or in the area around for more than 12,000 inhabitants. The small, poorly equipped health post can only provide the rudiments of medical treatment. The extension of this ambulant service is urgently necessary as is the extension of other stationary treatment facilities. The drinking water is completely inadequate both in quality and quantity. Plans to connect each house up to the main drinking-water pipeline and to provide the houses with canalisation can — for financial reasons — only be regarded as utopian. It is important that simple, cheap, hygienic methods of waste removal be developed and put into practice.

Despite some detailed criticism, Thimi does not only externally give the impression of being an intact Newar settlement. The social framework which gives each inhabitant a high degree of security and the relatively stable economy with a great deal of self-sufficiency, enable the population there to live a life which is, compared to other regions of Nepal, free of great problems of existence. Any measures taken which would affect the economic and/or social structure of the settlement must proceed from this fact. Caste barriers, political outside determination, inadequate infrastructure, under-employment and a chronic shortage of capital (to mention but a few problems) are limiting factors for future economic development, but at the same time, the energy of this village community must not be ignored. The ability to think in terms of profitability and to react flexibly on economic impulses are definitely not lacking, despite the perseverance of traditional behaviour.

Suggestions and/or measures taken in development politics should therefore only be introduced with extreme care, whereas the Newar conception of values should be respected and if possible integrated, even if it seems to be a hindrance in the eyes of western advisors. They, like the results of this study, need to be critically examined and put into context by those affected, i.e., the inhabitants of Thimi.

***Abstract of Paper on Nepalese Painting**

Author: Deepak Shimkhada, Scripps College

Paper Delivered at the Annual Meeting of Art Historians of Southern California at California State University, Northridge, on November 14, 1981.

Title: Measure of Karma: Origin and Iconography of Nāgapāsa in Nepalese Painting.

Two Nepalese paintings with similar iconography form the topic of this paper. While one of them is in the National Museum, Kathmandu, the other is in the Field Museum of Natural History, Chicago. On the basis of one work in the Kathmandu Museum that goes by the name of Nāgapāsa, the other may also be called by the same name. Iconographically, the paintings look very interesting, but unfortunately they have escaped the attention they deserve.

Executed on cotton cloth, the paintings are quite large in scale. Each composition consists of 72 square blocks upon which are drawn figures of human beings and snakes. The human beings are the representations of various levels of mundane and transmundane worlds, while the snakes are the manifestations of hindrances that come on one's way of higher consciousness.

Although the paintings are now preserved in the museums as works of art, they were originally used as boards of a game: a game that measured a player's karma. The game is also known in Tibet and India where it went under the names of Liberation and Leela respectively. In every version of the game, karma played a major role since it is that which determined the move of a player.

To play the game a player throws a die on the board, and by the rolls of the die, the player moves to the higher levels. The Buddhist game, consisting of 72 square

blocks, was developed in Tibet by Shakya Pandita in the 12th century in order to amuse his ailing mother. But in course of time, the game was modified which, in its present form, consists of 104 square blocks. Needless to say, the Tibetan version is colored by the Buddhist concept of Nirvāna. With the representations of three Hindu gods -- Brahma, Visnu and Shiva -- on top of each composition, the Nepalese paintings, however, show a Hindu origin. But in the format of 72 square blocks and the basic concept of releasing oneself from the fetters of human existence, both the Nepalese paintings are similar to the Tibetan prototype. Hence, it is possible that the source of the two paintings in question may have been derived from Shakya Pandita's original model.

It is said that in India too such a game was in existence from an early date. But today examples do not survive except the Snake and Ladder, a version popularized by the British in the 19th century, now found commercially in India. However, a prototype of the Nāgapāsa may have been originated in India since there is a reference to a similar game in the Pali canon at the time of the Buddha. Hence, the origin of the game has a long history. In the absence of Indian examples, the Nepalese paintings are the only extant documents that have 72 original square blocks of Shakya Pandita. As works of art, they reflect a painting style of 18th century Nepal, and they can conveniently be placed to the 18th century. In the present paper, an attempt will be made to trace the origin as well as to interpret the iconography of the paintings.

***The History of Tibet: 1933-1950**

Researcher: Melvyn Goldstein, Department of Anthropology, Case Western Reserve University, Cleveland, OH 44106 USA

Project:

A two-year study is about to begin under the auspices of the National Endowment for the Humanities. The study will primarily utilize oral accounts from formal government officials and others involved in the history of Tibet from 1933 to 1950. Ultimately, Dr. Goldstein expects to publish the results of this study. The oral accounts (some anonymous, some sealed until the death of the informant) will then be placed in an archive for future researchers.

***Fertility and Contraceptive Use in Kathmandu**

Researchers: Melvyn Goldstein (Anthropology, Case Western Reserve University, Cleveland, OH 44106 USA), James Ross (Anthropology, Case Western Reserve University, Cleveland, OH 44106 USA), and Sidney Schuler (Anthropology, Harvard University, Cambridge, MA 02138 USA)

Project:

A twenty-four month study of the social and economic determinants of fertility and contraceptive use in urban Nepal (Kathmandu) was funded by the National Institute of Child Health and Human Development of the National Institute of Health (NICHD/NIH) and begun in the summer of 1981. Dr. Goldstein is the principal investigator, working with co-investigators, Dr. Ross and Schuler.

***Fertility and the Economic Value of Children**

Researcher: Steve Folmar (Anthropology, Case Western Reserve University, Cleveland, OH 44106 USA)

Project:

Dissertation research in Pokhara, from February 1979 to July 1980, focussed upon the relationship between fertility and the economic value of children in two settings — one urban (in Pokhara) and the other rural (in Ghachok). Results are currently being analyzed.

***Senescence and Growth at High Altitude**

Researcher: Cynthia Beall (Anthropology, Case Western Reserve University, Cleveland, OH 44106 USA)

Project:

A study, funded by the National Science Foundation, on senescence and growth at high altitude, was conducted in the Muktinath and Doson Panchayats of Mustang District, from May to October, 1981 under the direction of Dr. Beall. The study undertook assessments of morphology, physiological functions, health status and physical activity throughout the life cycle in residents of that high altitude, Tibetan-speaking area.

***Tamang Women's Lives**

Researcher: Kathryn S. March (Anthropology, Cornell University, Ithaca NY 14853 USA)

Project:

Based upon fourteen autobiographical life history narratives, a volume is currently being prepared which will explore Tamang women's conceptions of their lives, their communities, and their culture. The volume has three aspects. The first consists of translations of fourteen women's personal narratives. The narratives were taped in informal settings and are first person accounts of the speakers' concerns through their lives. These accounts have been translated into English and will be introduced by brief ethnographic introductions focussing upon selected topics which recur in the women's accounts: women's relations with their brothers, sisters, mothers, husbands, mothers-in-law, and co-daughters-in-law; women's traditional property rights; the obligations of marriage; the problems of women's roles in peasant economics; women's involvement in trading expeditions; the importance of women's weaving; women's ritual birth; and other subjects which demonstrate that women are, collectively and individually, involved in the active construction and interpretation of their own social and cultural reality. Finally, a number of Tamang women's poetic song compositions -- especially those songs with personal or autobiographical content -- will be included to provide a sense of the richness of the imagery through which Tamang women think of themselves and their lives.

***The Epidemiology of Blindness in Nepal**

Project Directors: Dr. Nicole Grasset (World Health Organization, Kathmandu) and Dr. Ram, Prasad Pokhrel (Nepal Eye Hospital)

Researchers: Dr. Lawrence Brilliant, Girija Brilliant, Suzanne Gilbert, Dr. William Hawks, Jeanne Kuo, Dr. James Lepkowski (University of Michigan)

Project:

The Nepal Blindness Survey was conducted from August 1980 through May 1981 to gather data on the causes and distribution of blindness in Nepal, and to gather information on environmental, demographic, and sociocultural characteristics which are related to blinding conditions in Nepal. The Survey is the first phase of a five-year Program carried out by the World Health Organization and His Majesty's Government. The goal of this Program is to reduce preventable and curable blindness in Nepal by ninety percent within the next five years, and to make Nepal self-sufficient in eye care. The Survey was conducted among all residents of 105 randomly-selected wards throughout Nepal. An eye examination was performed on each resident and additional data were gathered on each of the leading causes of blindness: cataract, trachoma, eye trauma, and keratomalacia/xerophthalmia. General health care was also provided for all residents of the Survey sites and surrounding villages. Analysis of the data from the Nepal Blindness Survey is being supported by funds from the World Health Organization and the SEVA Foundation (Chelsea, Michigan).

Soon to be completed, the data analysis indicates that blindness is a serious public health problem in Nepal. Most of this blindness is due to cataract, much of which can be cured by cataract surgery. Survey results also specify the cultural and psychological factors which facilitate use of cataract surgery or which serve as barriers to its adoption. Though only a small percentage of the persons in Nepal are blind due to trachoma, this communicable condition is found among more than 900,000 Nepalese. The Survey is illuminating those familial and cultural patterns (hygiene, use of health services, use of shared garments, among others) which may inhibit or encourage spread of this blinding eye disease. Additional studies detail determinants and deterrants of blindness due to eye trauma and due to Vitamin A deficiency (xerophthalmia/keratomalacia). The summary of these data will result in recommendations for the Program's clinical and health education strategies and suggestions for the allocation of eye health manpower throughout Nepal.