

CONFERENCE NEWS

Linguistic Society of Nepal Holds 11th Annual Conference

Despite the time absorbed by political activities during the first half of the year, the newly constituted body of the Linguistic Society of Nepal was able to go ahead with its 11th Annual Conference on the 26th - 27th November 1990 at CEDA-Hall, Tribhuvan University, Kirtipur. The conference was inaugurated by the newly appointed Vice-Chancellor of the University, Prof. B.C. Malla. In his address the President of the Society, Abhi Subedi reviewed the past decade of the Society in the context of the changed political order in the country. Characterizing the past as inductive to non-academic structures inside the University, he expressed his hope for the development of an open, communicative attitude in a democratic environment.

Twenty papers were presented, focussing on three major areas: Indo-aryan language studies (Nepali, Maithili), Tibeto-Burman language studies (Rai, Newari, Tibetan), and didactic-curricular research in the field of English as a foreign language. Among the participants were scholars from Britain, Germany, India, Japan and USA. Especially meritorious were the contributions by R.K. Sprigg on "The Spelling-Style Pronunciation of Tibetan", N.K. Rai and W. Winter on "Tripllicated Verbal Adjuncts in Bantwa", M.P. Pokharel on "Passivisation in Nepali" and B.H. Matthies on "Judgement L2 Users by L1 Speakers".

Society passed the following resolutions: 1. a department of linguistics be established at Tribhuvan University to conduct teaching and research in linguistics; 2. in the forthcoming census, the Central Bureau of Statistics of His Majesty's Government Nepal be called upon to record language data from all speech communities in order to facilitate systematic study and classification of the languages of Nepal; 3. Tribhuvan University, His Majesty's Government and other responsible bodies be called upon to begin a systematic survey of languages in Nepal, especially of the languages facing extinction; 4. the Linguistic Society of Nepal stands ready to provide its expertise and to participate in carrying out these resolutions.

The Society intends to publish the proceedings of the conference during the coming year. Information can be obtained from: The Linguistic Society of Nepal, Kirtipur Campus, Kathmandu, Nepal.

Manfred Treu

From Town to City - and Beyond

Anyone who has witnessed the changes which Kathmandu has undergone in the last several decades, knows that not only has there been an increase in population, traffic, and construction but there has also been substantial change in the quality of living: traditional

At the end of the second day the

Newar urbanism is giving way to a more western-style city life. It was the aim of a four-day seminar held and organized by the Goethe Institute and the Solid Waste Management and Resource Mobilization Centre (SWMRMC) in collaboration with the South Asia Institute (Heidelberg) and "Urban Development through Local Effort" (UDLE) to discuss the related problems in a wider academic perspective while at the same time focussing on the practical issues of policy-making.

The first day was devoted to the traditional concepts of South Asian cities viewed in a historical context. Prof. R.L. Singh (Benares) gave the keynote address "City, Culture and Religion", in which he stressed the cosmological dimension of pre-industrial South Asian Cities and the role of their spatial concepts in a balanced 'habitat ecology'.

On the second day the seminar focussed on traditional urban culture in the Kathmandu Valley. In his keynote paper Dr. Niels Gutschow expressed his concern over the deterioration of the Valley's cultural heritage and the increased adoption of western values, as in the current preference for closed compound buildings over the public spaces of courtyard architecture. His description of Newar urbanism as a kind of "lost paradise" from which the West can only learn caused a lively discussion, during which the decline of the *guthi* system emerged as a hot issue.

The outlook for the future was the theme of the third day: "Urban Development in Nepal Towards the End of the 20th Century". Dr. Hans

Christoph Rieger (Heidelberg) emphasized in his paper the accelerating demographic changes to be expected within the next ten years, and their implications. This was the time for town planners and Government officials to voice and defend their policies. Controversial issues, such as decentralization and settlement regulations, were discussed in what proved to be the longest session.

Whereas these three sessions were "expert sessions" with about thirty scholars and policy-makers as participants, the fourth day - on which summaries of the three sessions were presented - was open to public discussion. Here academics, who usually tend to stick to themselves, engaged in dialogue with a wider group of interested persons. The ensuing discussion did not in all cases, however, bridge their divergent interests and experiences.

Martin Gaenzle

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Procedure of application for research in Nepal unchanged

Though the political changes in Nepal have had significant effects on Tribhuvan University and the general academic atmosphere, there has not yet been any change (or planned changes) in the formal procedure of application for a research permit. As before, application forms have to be submitted to the Chief of the Research Division (Dr. Krishna Bahadur Thapa) in four copies, including the research proposal (preferably according to recommended format giving details about the objective of the study, the methodology, scheduling and budgeting), and one letter from the home university, one from the sponsoring agency and one from the respective embassy in Kathmandu. If there is no sponsoring agency, a statement of the applicants' bank account showing sufficient funds is also accepted.

Upon receipt of the application, the Research Division decides to which institute or department the applicant should be affiliated (preferences may be stated), and the files are forwarded to that institution for approval. If affiliation is granted, the application has to be formally approved by the Research Division, the Rector and the Vice-Chancellor; before registration with the University can take place. Parallel to this process, the Research Division seeks a clearance from the Home Ministry. In the past this often proved to be the most time-consuming procedure. Since the

establishment of the new Immigration Department in Thamel integrated within the Home Ministry, clearance from the Ministry appears to move a bit faster. After registration with the University and clearance from the Home Ministry, the application for a non-tourist visa goes through the Education Ministry to the Immigration Department which issues the visa. If all goes well, the Research Division assured me, the process can be completed in about three months. Still applications should be submitted as early as possible.

In 1989 a regulation was introduced which created some confusion and maybe still does: all post-doctoral researchers are required to pay 15 % their research budget to the University. This regulation is still valid, so it is worth clarifying that the total budget that is taken into account is the research budget proper (allowances, equipment costs, etc.) provided by the funding agency, not the salary of the researcher. The 15 % that goes to the University is shared in the following way: 7 % is paid to a "co-researcher" (usually from the affiliating institute), 3 % to the affiliating institute, and 5 % to the University administration. Considering the dire financial situation of the University, it is unlikely that this somewhat unpopular regulation will be changed; or, if changes are made, they will only come after May elections.

New Courses at SOAS in Nepali Language and Culture

Nepali and Himalayan Studies at SOAS

The School of Oriental and African Studies in London possesses a long tradition of teaching and research in the field of Nepali language and literature, and in various aspects of Himalayan culture - perhaps the oldest of any institution in Europe. The language tradition dates back to the pioneering work of Sir Ralph Lilley Turner, whose *Nepali Dictionary*, a masterpiece of lexicography published in 1931, is still the best Nepali-English dictionary available. Subsequently, Dr. T.W. Clark's *Introduction to Nepali* (1963) and Dr. D.J. Matthews' *Course in Nepali* (1984) became standard works for foreign learners of the language, and Dr. M.J. Hutt's *Nepali: a National Language and its Literature* (1988) and *Himalayan Voices* (1991) have made Nepali literature more widely known. Anthropologists and Tibetologists from the School, such as Professor C. von Fürer-Haimendorf and Professor D.L. Snellgrove have also made celebrated contributions to our understanding of Nepal and the Himalayan region.

For many years Nepali has been taught at SOAS as a component of the B.A. degree, and as an option within the M.A. Area Studies programme, and has been a subject for postgraduate research. A large number of intensive short courses have also been arranged through the External Services Division to cater to the needs of diplomats, aidworkers and so on. Having created a new lectureship in Nepali studies, SOAS is

now extremely well-equipped to offer a new course devoted exclusively to Nepali language and culture which makes the subject more accessible and attractive than it has ever been before.

The New Courses

Participants may enrol for one term (October to December) or for one academic year (October to June). The single term option will probably suit people about to embark on a period of professional work in Nepal, or those who require no more than a basic grounding in the language and a general understanding of Nepal's history and culture. It will culminate in an examination leading to a Certificate in Nepali Studies. The one-year course is intended for students with a longterm or research interest in Nepal. It will end in an examination and an essay assignment leading to a Diploma in Nepali Studies.

The Certificate Course

Classes during the first term will be attended by all course participants: a total of approximately 100 hours of tuition will be provided, including work in the language laboratory. The emphasis will be on literacy, basic conversational ability and a working knowledge of Nepal's historical and cultural background imparted by a weekly seminar and a programme of directional reading. Topics covered will include history, ethnography, linguistics, religion and caste. Candidates for the Certificate qualification will sit an examination in December.

The Diploma Course

Candidates for the Diploma qualification will continue their study of Nepali grammar and increase their conversational proficiency during the second and third terms. Reading practice will be introduced, leading to the study of selected texts during the summer term, and dialogue practices will be held with the involvement of a mother-tongue speaker. The standard of written and spoken Nepali acquired by each candidate will be examined in July.

At the end of the first term, candidates will select a topic concerning Nepal that especially interests them - an aspect of Nepal's history, culture or literature - and will embark upon a programme of reading, guided by tutorials. Weekly seminars will continue until late June, focusing on topics such as economic development, political change, literature and folklore, art and architecture, Hinduism and Sanskritisation, gender roles, etc. Towards the end of summer vacation each candidate will submit an essay of about 6,000 words on his or her chosen topic. This will count towards the final grade attained.

Both the Certificate and the Diploma represent the most intensive courses in Nepali language and culture available in any academic centre outside Asia; they will be offered every year, beginning in October 1991.

Fees for the Certificate in Nepali studies (10 week course) will be approximately £1,500. Fees for the Diploma in Nepali Studies (one year course) will be £3,750.

Applications are now invited for 1991 and 1992. No specific

qualifications are required, but applicants should be able to demonstrate an ability to learn foreign languages and a commitment to the study of Nepal. Please write in the first instance to:

Dr. Michael Hutt (Lecturer in Nepali)

School of Oriental and African Studies

Thronhaugh Street, Russell Square
London WC1H 0XG

The Himalayan Forum

Seminar series during Summer Term at the Centre of South Asian Studies, School of Oriental and African Studies, London, Summer 1991. Thursday afternoons at 5 p.m. in room G56.

23rd April

Dr. Declan Quigley (Cambridge): The limits of caste: some consequences of recent change for the Newars of Nepal.

2nd May

Dr. N.J. Allen
(Oxford): Changing patterns of kinship and social structure in the Himalayas.

9th May

Professor Richard Burghart (Heidelberg): Sovereignty in the Himalayan region.

16th May

Professor Lionel Caplan (SOAS): "Tribes" and "peasants" in the anthropology of Nepal.

23rd May

Dr. David Seddon (University of East Anglia): Democracy and development in Nepal.

30th May

Dr. Peter Parkes

(Queens University): Minority manouvres: Continuities and transformations among the Kalasha (Kalash Kafirs) of the Hindu Kush, 1950-1990. (To be followed by a showing of the 'Disappearing World' film on the Kalasha).

7th June

Dr. Michael Hutt

(SOAS): Intellectual realignments in post-Panchayat Nepal.

CONTRIBUTORS TO THIS ISSUE

Richard Burghart is Professor of Ethnology at the Südasiens-Institut, Universität Heidelberg. He has recently completed a study of the Maithili language and is currently working on the changing relationship between state and society in Nepal.

Martin Gaenzle is wissenschaftlicher Angestellter at the Südasiens-Institut, Universität Heidelberg and Director of the Institute's branch office in Kathmandu. His monograph *Verwandtschaft und Mythologie bei den Mewahang Rai in Ostnepal* is forthcoming from Steiner Verlag, Wiesbaden. His current research is on Rai ritual texts and oral tradition.

Michael Hutt is Lecturer in Nepali at the School of Oriental & African Studies, University of London. He is compiler of *A Catalogue of Nepali Printed Books in the India Office Library* (British Library, 1985), and the author of *Nepali: a National Language and its Literature* (Sterling, 1988). A volume of translations of Nepali literature, entitled *Himalayan Voices*, will appear this year.

Carol Tingey is an ethno-

musicologist at the School of Oriental & African Studies. She recently completed her doctorate on Nepalese *pancai baja* music and currently holds an award from the Leverhulme Foundation to continue her field research on Nepalese folk music traditions.

Manfred Treu is Head of the Department of German at Tribhuvan University, Campus of International Languages.

John Whelpton is a free-lance writer on Nepalese affairs based in Hong Kong. His translation of and commentary on *Jang Bahadurko Belait-Yatra* was published by Sahayogi (1983) and his *Kings, Soldiers and Priests: Nepalese Politics and the Rise of Jang Bahadur Rana, 1830-1857* will be published this year by Manohar. His bibliography, *Nepal*, was published last year by Clio Press in their World Bibliographical Series.

Silke Wolf is wissenschaftliche Hilfskraft at the Südasiens-Institut, Universität Heidelberg. She is currently in Nepal collecting documentation on the 1991 electoral campaign.

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