them and then I got interested in this thing, one thing led to another and in 1957 I started this thing. In 1960 I got some help from the University of California through Leo Rose, and in eight or nine years I wrote Land Tenure and Taxation. It's more than thirty years old now, but I am glad that the basic definitions I devised at that time are still valid. I don't have any reason to change them. (...)(...) What you do sometimes doesn't have any logical reasons. It's only what you want to do. I have to explain maybe at some point why I want to do it, but that's not important, is it? You want to do it.

Q: What about this Himalayan Border Country Research Project?
A: That was Dr. I. R. Rose in 1964 or 65. There was a controversy there; they had got a research grant from the Defense Department of the United States. There was a clamour that it was CIA funded. I said: look, I don't know, I get paid for doing research on Nepal, I don't care where the money comes from. But I didn't have to explain. And all of a sudden the project was discontinued in 1969.

Q: So you were involved as translator?
A: They gave me a grant, they never told me what to do. They said: You (can) do what you want to do. And I said I want to do land tenure and taxation in Nepal. It started with a one volume project, one became two, two became three, three became four. So they financed all that.

Q: Let me come to my last question: Which historic period do you find most fascinating? You have been writing on the early Shahta period of Prithvi Narayan Shah and on the Rana period...

A: From my point of view the most interesting period is from 1768 to 1815. The Gorkhal Empire period. Because things happened. Things happened, achievements were made, despite lapses and failures, but something was created. And when you create it is not all the way a linear one-way process, you get setbacks also. Isn't it a surprising thing that the state of Gorkha became Nepal? Just think of it like a Nepali, as I do. They created it. You see, before that, I said you just a short time ago, there was no idea of a state. It was just the King's personal possessions, tribal organization. Look at the Limbus, they never went beyond the confines of their tribal organization. Now,... a state formation is much more progressive than a tribal formation. It has a secular base. They never developed beyond tribes. But here Prithvi Narayan Shah comes and says: Look, we are dhuño. [lit. 'stone', but here as a metaphor for the state.]

Q: That's the concept which made the difference...
A: It made a difference, this is dhuño where everybody has equal rights. Now this concept is completely unknown in this part of the world. (...) I think I am the first person to have brought this out. I haven't seen it anywhere. Others just described what it did. But here it comes out: dhuño is different from and beyond the king's personality. You are not loyal to the King but to the dhuño, which is a very progressive idea and ideal. (...) And they did it. Now you have a state from the Mechi to the Mahakali, 54,000 square miles.

RESEARCH REPORTS

Individual Project

Project: Internal and external conceptualization of social change in North-East Nepal: the study of individuality in a traditional community.

Researcher: Michael Möhlich, South Asia Institute, Heidelberg University

Sponsor: German Academic Exchange Service (DAAD)

This study primarily concerns the individual's perspective in cognising and handling his own culture. The focus of research is the Sherpas in three different contexts: a village in Solu, where tradition does not necessarily exclude social change (see Omar 1990), various educational and development projects and Sherpas in Kathmandu who have migrated from the region of Solu.

A few remarks on terminology are necessary, since current usage of the concepts "internal" versus "external" might lead to a sociological bias. Internal in the cognitive sense of this study means 'normative', that is a judgement as to the relative value of an object, event or attitude, putting it on a value-scale in relation to an absolute value. External refers to 'substantial', that is a perspective not free of judgement but pointing to the qualities of an object, event or attitude etc. to their relationships, connectedness and transformability (see also the discussion between Dumont and Marriott). It remains to be asked whether this distinction is only the concern of anthropologists, or whether it is also found in the concepts of people themselves, reflected in the way individuality finds expression.

It was found initially that individuality has an important cultural value in oral traditions (molla, sh.), including a variety of stories (pe, sh.) of the origin of the world, man's place in it and of social behaviour. Such oral traditions are found not only among the Sherpas but among other groups as well (see Aziz 1985, Jackson 1984, Macdonald 1965) and thus open a way for further comparison. On a deeper level such distinctions can also be found by asking the double question (why is this present, why is that absent). For example, is the concept of the "evil" in traditional societies really something which is conceived as being outside of man? Or, could it just as well be another discourse on the same problem, a change from a normative to a substantial perspective in what (e.g. responsibility, attitude etc.) we attribute to others and ourselves? And, if it is just a different perspective, what is left aside then and how will this conceptualization be affected through social change?

Having tried to indicate that recognizing the possibility of a variety of individual perspectives also includes a setting of priorities and leaving aside other knowledge, it remains necessary to include in this "analysis from both sides" the Sherpas' concept of social units and their norms of behaviour, that are the focus of cognition and social action. For example, the conceptual division of power and purity that is found within the traditional cultural sphere and the division of power and purity that was also a fact in the Buddhist community of the Sherpa might seem to be equal in character, since the latter could be thought of as an effect of, or counter-part or structural adaptation to the process of Hinduization (see Barth 1969). Thus it is traceable in the history of the Sherpas that there was, as in the epoch of the formation of the Nepalese state, a series of temple foundings connected with the rise of local power-centres, whose area of influence was, as in the dominant example, not identical with that of the influence of the clerical sphere. Bringing in mind the individuals' perspectives, it has to be noted, however, that the concept of power among Buddhist communities is differently conceptualized from that of the Hindus.
There seems to be not so much an encompassment of the opposite of purity but a more direct and at the same time more independent, reciprocal balancing relationship between the two. For example, how is modern education influencing the perspective on traditional knowledge?

**NEWS**

**Conferences**

**Human Rights Violations in the Himalaya - The Domination of Elites**

6-10 December 1991, Kathmandu

As a result of democratization in Nepal and the newly gained freedom of speech, it is now permitted to discuss potentially explosive topics in public. Between the 6th and 10th December 1991 in the Hotel Vaja (Kathmandu), about 100 human-rights activists, environmentalists, politicians, journalists and scientists from all over Nepal, as well as from Ladakh, Garhwal, Sikkim, Bhutan (refugees), Tibet (refugees), Germany, England and the Netherlands met to examine critically human rights problems and the dominance of elites: the meeting was organized by NGOs, such as Nepal Watch (Berlin) and the Peace Movement Nepal, Lalitpur.

In an unusually free atmosphere there were discussions on human rights and human rights violations connected with the following topics: environment, health, peace, education, language, access to information, freedom of speech, political participation, women, children, bonded labour, religion, culture, rights of ethnic minorities, land conflicts, racism, foreign aid, foreign media and tourism. From the discussion it became obvious, how much ethnic minorities (who in some cases are not 'minorities' at all) in the Himalaya feel politically, economically and culturally oppressed. Above all, religious elites and centralist governments in Delhi, Kathmandu, Thimphu and Beijing were held responsible for transforming ethnic groups into aliens. As to Nepal, it is not even known how many ethnic groups there are exactly, and what percentage of the total national population members of these groups represent. Tamang spokesmen, for example, estimated that they represented 17% of the whole population, and non-Hindus altogether about 75%. In the conference they stressed that as long as the Nepalese constitution proclaimed Hinduism a state-religion, many people would not reveal that they actually belonged to another religion: the disadvantages would be too great.

Massive human rights violations were reported anew from Tibet and Bhutan. In both cases there was no reaction from India or Nepal. In the case of Bhutan there has even been no reaction worldwide. About 70,000 Nepalese Bhutanese people here had to flee Bhutan, and it is said that 300 come each day to seek help in the refugee-camps in eastern Nepal. From Tibet also about 300 people escape monthly to Nepal, there often being maltreated, extorted and robbed.

The participants at the meeting agreed upon the following statement (interestingly the demands in connection with the situation in Tibet were not reported on by the government media).

We call on the Governments concerned to ensure equality of all ethnic, social, religious and linguistic groups, and to take appropriate measures to enable members of all these groups to participate fully in society and in decision-making processes. Surveys should be conducted to determine the size and living conditions of the various ethnic groups in the region.

The constitution of any country should not promote, safeguard, or grant preferential treatment to any particular religion.

The right to a healthy environment is the most fundamental of human rights. Governments concerned should take appropriate measures to prevent the further destruction of the environment. We strongly urge Governments to set up environmental protection systems.

Governments should ensure that education is available in the mother tongue of different ethnic groups, at least at primary level. They should make available existing resources, including teachers and materials, to enable this to take place.

Governments in the Himalayan region that do not have a language policy and planning should initiate such measures.

The UN Convention on the Rights of the Child should be implemented. Special measures should be taken to improve the lives of women and to prevent their continued exploitation.

Communication through the media of announcements, reports and official Government statements should be in the languages of the people.

We call for the increased awareness of, and support for, the plight of the Tibetan people in their struggle for the restoration of their human rights, including the right to self-determination.

The world community should extend support and solidarity to the ongoing movement for human rights, justice and democracy in Bhutan, and should provide relief measures and protection to the refugees in India and Nepal.

The protection and rights of all refugees in the region should be guaranteed under the international laws concerned.

Finally, it was proposed and accepted that a Himalayan Network be established to monitor, promote and document the human rights situation in the Himalayan region. It will be called "Peace Himalaya" with its headquarters in Kathmandu

**Ludmila Titing**

**SOAS Conference Review**

**Ladakh-History and Culture. Conference at SOAS, June 1-2, 1992.**

Since 1981, four meetings on Ladakh have been held in Europe, more recently in connection with the International Association for Ladakh Studies. The fifth, to have been held in Ladakh, was postponed, but another opportunity for a meeting of Ladakh scholars was recently provided by a commemorative event to mark the 150th anniversary of the death of the Hungarian scholar Alexander Csoma de Körös. Csoma compiled a Tibetan-English dictionary, a Tibetan grammar and a Tibetan-Sanskrit dictionary of Buddhist terminology, and he is considered to be one of the early founders of Tibetan studies in the west. Some of his work was carried out during the 1820s from the monasteries of Zangla and Phuktal in Zanskar.

The two-day conference held at SOAS and organised by Philip Denwood, drew scholars from several countries in Europe including Hungary, Csoma's homeland. The theme of Csoma's life and work provided a focus for examining anew Ladakhi history and its sources, and it was this fresh, yet critical, historical perspective that characterised the spirit of the conference.

In 1819 Csoma, with 14 languages already at his command, set out on an epic journey across Asia with hopes of discovering the ancient homeland of the Hungarian people and the origins of their language. This he failed to achieve, but by 1822 he had reached Ladakh. At Dras he encountered William Moorcroft, a veterinary surgeon working for the East India Company, whose official mission it then was to procure horses from Central Asia and improve the Company stud. Moorcroft was concerned to further scholarship in the field of Tibetan language and literature because of its potential value in establishing commercial and political relations, and he recommended that Csoma study Tibetan and secured him financial assistance for this task.

**Re:veiw**