EUROPEAN BULLETIN OF HIMALAYAN RESEARCH

Number 4, 1992

Südasien-Institut
Heidelberg
CONTENTS

REVIEW ARTICLES
Ecological Crisis and Social Movements in the Indian Himalayas: Antje Linkenbach ............... 1
Decline of the Rong-folk: reflections on A.R. Fonin's Lepcha, my vanishing tribe:
R.K. Spigg ........................................... 14

ARCHIVES
Himalayan Archives in Paris, Part two: Lucette Boulnois ..................................................... 22
The Collections on Nepal in the Bibliothèque Nationale ..................................................... 22
The Library of the Centre d'Études de l'Inde et de l'Asie du Sud ........................................... 28
The Centre de Documentation sur la Chine Contemporaine ................................................ 30
The Société Asiatique Library .................................................................................................... 31
Early Christian missions in the Himalayas: including a note on the location of missionary archives in Italy: Dipak Raj Pant ................................................................. 32

INTERVIEW
On The Topicality of History - An Interview with Mahesh Chandra Regmi:
Martin Gaenszle ......................................................................................................................... 40

RESEARCH REPORTS
Individual Project
Internal and external conceptualization of social change in northeastern Nepal:
Michael Mühlich ......................................................................................................................... 47

NEWS
Conferences
Ladakh History and Culture: Maria Phylactou ......................................................................... 49
SASON Congress in Kathmandu: Joanna Pfaff-Czamecka & Martin Gaenszle ......................... 52
"The Anthropology of Nepal: People, Problems and Processes:
Charles Ramble .......................................................................................................................... 54
The Himalayan Forum at SOAS: Michael Hutt .................................................................... 55
Politics, Identity, and Cultural Change in the Himalayan Region,
University of Oxford: David Gellner ....................................................................................... 56
Obituary
Martin Hoftun & Bill Raaper: David Gellner ........................................................................... 56

ANNOUNCEMENTS
Symposia:
Bhutan: A traditional order and the forces of change, SOAS: Michael Hutt..................... 57
Publications:
The Himalayan Forum at Himalayan Research as Part of a Global Effort for the Mountains:
Rudolf Högger ............................................................................................................................. 58
Annapurna Sattrek Map, Nepal ................................................................................................. 60

CORRIGENDA ............................................................................................................................ 60

CONTRIBUTORS TO THIS ISSUE .......................................................................................... 61

NOTES TO CONTRIBUTORS
Editors:
Richard Burghart
Martin Gaenszle
András Höfer
Südasien-Institut
Im Neuenheimer Feld 330
D - 6900 Heidelberg
Germany

Contributing Editors:
Austria: Dr. Michael Torsten Much
Institut für Tibetologie und
Buddhismuskunde
Universität Wien
Maria-Theresien-Str. 3/11
A-1090 Wien

France: Dr. Anne de Sales
23, rue Montorgueil
F-75001 Paris

Great Britain: Dr. Michael Hutt
Department of Indology
School of Oriental & African Studies
Thornhaugh Street
GB-London WC1

Poland: Dr. Krysztof Debnicki
Instytut Orientalistyczny
Uniwersytetu Warszawskiego
Kratowskie
Przedmiescie 26/28
P-Warszawa.

Switzerland: Dr. Joanna Pfaff-Czamecka
Ethnologisches Seminar
der Universität Zürich
Freiensteinstr. 35
CH-8032 Zürich.

Scandinavia: Hakan Wahlquist
The National Museum of Ethnography
P.O. Box 27140
S-102 52 Stockholm
S-Sweden

REVIEW ARTICLES

Ecological Crisis and Social Movements in the Indian Himalayas
Antje Linkenbach


According to the conventional academic division of labour Himalayan ecology was traditionally studied by natural scientists, esp. geographers, who focussed their research on the climatic, geophysical and hydrological conditions and the flora and fauna of the Himalaya as a mountainous ecosystem. Human beings were seen just as one part of the subject of human ecology. The research of anthropologists and historians, on the other hand, focussed on the culture, economy and history of the hill communities and showed little interest in ecological issues.

In the last few years a critical discourse on environmental problems in the Himalayas has emerged, bringing togethernatural and social scientists who are now playing a central role in ecological debates in India. In the following review I shall present some stimulating, and occasionally controversial, publications concerning ecological and social change in the western part of the Indian Himalaya (Uttarakhand) as well as peoples' responses to these changes. The focus is on socio-historical approaches, but an important debate on linkages between parts of the natural ecosystem will also be briefly mentioned.

The ecological debate in India

In the last decade a steadily growing ecological awareness in all parts of India can be observed, which has to be seen as the result of an intensifying discourse on environmental changes and their impact on the people. In this context special attention has been given to the basic natural resources - forests, soil, water and air. One of the main issues of the environmental debate is not only to identify their state of deterioration or degradation, but also to discover the preconditions and reasons for the degradation, as well as the resultant consequences for man and nature. The discussion, therefore, centers on problems, such as forest decline, soil erosion, decline of soil fertility,