

## DISSERTATION ABSTRACTS

Philippe Ramirez :*Patrons et Clients : étude des relations politiques dans l'ancien royaume indo-népalais d'Argha (Népal central)* Paris X, Nanterre, UFR Sciences Sociales et Administration, 3 vol., 653 p.

Of Indo-European language and Hindu religion, the Indo-Nepalese constitute the majority of the population in the kingdom of Nepal. They traditionally occupy moderate altitude zones (800-2500m.), where they devote themselves to the cultivation of cereal grains.

This study aims at identifying the principal constituents of existing Indo-Nepalese political structures through a territorial approach. For that reason, Argha in central Nepal, an autonomous principality until the end of the eighteenth century, was examined.

First, an attempt was made to define the actual limits of the spheres of solidarity and identity. In a landscape of scattered settlements, and in the absence of village entities, the only group of permanent cooperation is composed of those who share the same hearth *culo*, the same house *ghar*. Each of these domestic groups is connected to a patrilineage *kul*, relatively located and endowed with a ritual and implied foundation. In the absence of internal co-operation, an interdependence with regard to the exterior world exists. The interpersonal relationships among relatives (on the mother's side, the father's side and relations by marriage) are

exclusively and explicitly founded on inequality, especially in the domains of authority and respect (*man*). The social landscape is formed from the descendants of the founders, around whom families in their service gravitate.

Certain of these "dominant lineage!" benefit from administrative and religious privileges which date before the founding of modern Nepal. In the case of Argha, ancient royal priests were placed to adjudicate then to occupy the positions left vacant by ousted princes. For more than a century, they were recognised as representative officials (*mukhiyā*) of the Nepalese king, within the framework of a local system of government founded on the delegation of authority.

After 1961 political duties were no longer attributed by the sovereign, but by electoral means. This major evolution in the principles of definition of legitimacy had two results: the authority of old, dominant lineages is subject to dispute, and a network of numerous clients is hereafter indispensable to winning votes. The importance of the patron-client relationship has been reinforced by the growing dependence of localities with respect to national and administrative economic structures. The patron has become an unavoidable intermediary. Nevertheless, the phenomenon of patronage is certainly not new. It is consistent with the eminently personal nature and the inequality of social relationships in the Indo-Nepalese milieu.

The bonds among lineages and the patronal networks in a particularly significant political context, that of electoral opposition, have finally been analysed, first at the local level, and then the regional level. Three aspects of current political structures were

highlighted. Conflicts involve vertical factions, including families of quite diverse status and aligned with dominant lineages. The areas of inherited influence are still visible and remain the principal axis of affiliations and rivalries. However, groups who claim their autonomy appear on the periphery. In spite of everything, ancient leaders as well as current leaders, exert their influence in clearly perceptible geographic areas: this is the concrete reflection of political structures based on interpersonal connections.

Isabelle Sacareau : *Guides, Porteurs et Agences de Trekking du Népal*.

*Etude géographique du tourisme himalayen et de sa dynamique socio-spatiale*, Université Paris VII-Jussieu, UFR GHSS, Département de Géographie, 1994, 2 vol., 552 p.

In less than 30 years, Nepal has become the ultimate destination for adventure tourism. The highest summits of the world attract tens of thousands of hikers and alpinists using logistic services proposed by some of the 200 specialised trekking agencies primarily concentrated in Kathmandu. (In 1991 the Immigration Office issued more than 61,000 trekking permits to the 293,000 tourists visiting Nepal. The percentage of tourists requesting such permits is increasing each year.)

The tourism business relies upon a large trail network and inexpensive farm labour in charge of "carrying" during the trekking season. This work represents a traditional activity and, in addition,

constitutes a means of commerce as well as communication among various local groups, given Nepal's poor infrastructures. For some of the Nepalese mountain population, cash is provided through multi-economic activities. They periodically migrate in search of temporary work to balance the precariousness of subsistence from agriculture. As a result, economic incentives in this activity have become increasingly attractive to a larger group of Nepalese.

More than any other seasonal activity, the trekking business is a major factor in social and spatial mobility, accelerating the process of rural exodus and the introduction of Himalayan farmers to the market economy and to urban values of the modern world. Starting as multi-active mountain guides, they tend to become mono-active with the progressive abandonment of their native villages to permanently settle in urban areas. This new opportunity, made possible through "networking", has allowed increased social and economic mobility even for those from poor educational backgrounds, but has also triggered disparities among guides, porters and farmers who are settled in villages. Consequently, the trekking economy has radically impacted traditional Nepalese society, culture and environment.

