Errata

In the paper on Himalayan archives in Paris, part II, EBHR n°4, 1992, some words or lines have been dropped during the printing process:
- p.23, 2nd column, from line 35 on, one should read:

...such as Dor Bahadur Bista's and Marc Gaborieu's works, and monographs on Nepalese castes, tribes, or localities: Limbu, Gurung, Tamang, Sherpa tribes and on Dolpo, Tarap, Panauti, etc.
- p.26, 1st column, from line 3, one should read:

...Later on it was Miss Silburn only who was in charge of the cataloguing. The following register lists a Kanjur reprint...
- p.27, 1st column, last three lines, one should read:

...even English and German editions of Hue's and Gabet's famous book, of which 6 French editions already existed when this catalogue was written.
- p.28, 1st column, from line 39, one should read:

...or the subject classification catalogue, also divided in sections according to the time of arrival of the book in the library, successively hand-written in registers, on cards in classical drawer files, and finally on line through computers, this last system since 1985. (This was in 1992, now in 1996 the Catalogue is computerised back to 1974 at least).
- p.30, 2nd column, from the first line, one should read:

...Eastern miscellany (in Chinese) from 1905 to 1973 including articles on Tibet, useful items are also books on the whole of Chinese history, dynastic histories, biographic dictionaries, etc. But what is especially valuable...

THE ORGANISATION OF SPACE AND THE SYMBOLISM OF THE INDO-NEPALESE HOUSE IN CENTRAL NEPAL - PRELIMINARY OBSERVATIONS DURING FIELDWORK

Gil Daryn

The House has a central role in the organisation of Bahuns (Brahman) culture and society. It can be seen as part of a general conception in which the self (microcosms) and the world (macrocosms) are all considered to be 'living temples'. The house is related to and built according to this model which combines two perceptions. The first sees the house as a living entity which, like a Bahun, should go through Hindu life cycle rituals and can become sick etc. The second views the house as a temple, a pure and holy place for the gods. The Bahun also perceive other artificial constructions they build around their houses, such as cautara (a resting place for travellers built in and out of the village), Bhume (the earth god) temples in and near the premises of the rice fields, and other temples that surround the village like kut deota (clan gods) and ban Devi (forest goddesses), in a similar way.

The Bahun view themselves as being an organic part of the house: being the house ama (soul). Moreover, people actually identify themselves with their houses. The house, the way it is built and used can be seen to symbolise human perceptions of the self. The exchanges of evil messengers (through witchcraft and sorcery) between the village houses or family temples, reflects the social milieu to be found there. That social milieu is sodden with mistrust and suspicion, people are continually acting behind masks and playing role games up into the most intimate levels they may have.

The house has a primary role in a series of security fences that Bahuns try to build around themselves and their village. Mainly, it is seen as a shelter from the majority of the evil spirits found in the village and its surroundings. However, the lifelong daily effort of guarding one's own body/family/house borders and the endless quest for safety and purity seems to be somewhat futile.

1 Field work going on in a Bahun village in hills of central Nepal. This is done as part of Ph.D. research under the supervision of Professor Alan Macfarlane at the Department of Anthropology, the University of Cambridge, England.
Houses and people alike are believed to have no immunity to the invasion of birs, which are considered to be the most the most terrible evil messengers to be kept by people in their houses. They keep them in order to send them to other people's houses and by that try to harm and destroy each other. Birs actually symbolise the inevitable danger to one's body and house. This concept of birs shared by the Bahun in the village in which I am working is indicative of the main ambivalence that governs their life. Although they might have liked to see themselves as Leibniz's Monads, closed in a bubble with no window and thus immune to invasion of evil and impurity, they are compelled to have families and live as part of a society. That inevitably brings with it an immanent danger that is to be found in almost every facet, stage and action through life.

The main function of the houses or living temples seems to be connected to the keeping and consuming of food. Eating in itself is seen as an act of sacrifice or puja done for the gods of the house and those within oneself.

The relative way in which the borders of a house are defined suggests a perception of a continuum between interior and exterior rather than the definite concept to which we might be accustomed. This relativity, or perception of things as being on a continuum between two extremes resembles another main concept in the Bahun culture, the concept of purity.

In sum, understanding the place of the house in the Bahun culture, its stages of construction, and the social relationship of living in it seems to be the key to the uncoding of the self and society of the Bahuns, who are the most influential social group in Nepal.

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Since antiquity up to the present day "Tibet" has been associated with romantic notions of a counter - or other - world. These affirmative as well as antipathetic representations of Tibet were critically reviewed at the international symposium "Mythos Tibet" (10-12 May 1996) in Bonn (organised by the Forum der Kunst- und Ausstellungshalle der Bundesrepublik Deutschland and the Seminar für Sprach- und Kulturwissenschaft Zentralasiens, Rheinische Friedrich-Wilhelms-Universität, Bonn) held on the occasion of the opening of the exposition "Weisheit und Liebe - 1000 Jahre Kunst des tibetischen Buddhismus". Contrary to academic traditions the symposium was open to and was met with a good response from a broader public - except a few visitors whose hopes for a deeper foundation of their personal myths about Tibet were severely disappointed by the high scholarly pitch of the lectures.

On the first two days, the focus lay on the historical development of the ambivalent images of Tibet in the West and the use and effects of these images. The first rather reliable information did not reach Europe before the 17th century with the reports of the catholic missionaries Antonio d'Andrade and Ippolito Desideri, who nurtured negative prejudices about the uncivilised barbarians with their disgusting superstitious rituals (Rudolf Kaschewsky). Enlightened scientists looked down with contempt and fear on the mystical enthusiasm on the one hand, and the degeneration of original Buddhism on the other, while romantic partisans (not knowing that the Blue Flower does, indeed, grow in the Himalayas) were looking for secret wisdom of the Orient, criticising Occidental civilisation and incipient modernisation with its impact on individuals and society (Loden Sherab Dagyab Rinpoche). Per Kvaerne's survey of more modern Tibetan studies showed that they were either led by evolutionist and colonialist attitudes or, again, by the search for archaic traditions and the original religion of Tibet. Recent studies consider Tibet as integrated in a broader context of Asian culture and history.