while insight into Tibetan Buddhism might help to restore the ecological balance, the application of this insight encounters economic as well as socio-cultural limitations. Graham E. Clarke polemised against the new myth of a "noble conservator", drawing attention to problems of desertification and deforestation, partly natural and partly caused by Tibetans entering the modern market economy. Likewise, the Gandhian principle of non-violence adopted by the present Dalai Lama for political reasons is merely projected back onto his predecessors and was not part of the intellectual atmosphere of the past (Elliott Sperling).

As for tolerance and rationality, Jeffrey Hopkins expounded the custom of noncritical allegiance towards the own, as well as opponent-bashing of rival monastic colleges that is part of the traditional education system.

With the exception of Robert A.F. Thurman who, in his lecture and in his opening address (as organiser of the exposition), emphasised the spiritual power of the Tibetan culture, the lectures showed a rather critical distance towards the subject of their studies. However, not without reaching a limit: the discussion was blocked when the question was raised from the audience whether the visual art of Tibet, especially the representation of the Shambhala myth, was not full of terror, violence, and intolerance (against Moslems), and which could not be explained and put aside as psychological means leading to a peaceful mind. If this somewhat emotional accusation corresponds to the negative mystification of Tibet, the uncritical affirmation of the harmless contents of Tibetan paintings corresponds to the romantic one, and it might be time to examine this question with as much scrutiny as the various themes of this conference, presented in a way that makes us look forward to the publication of the proceedings.

PILGRIMAGE IN TIBET, Leiden, 12-13 September 1996
Conference report by Katia Buffetrille

A Seminar on Pilgrimage in Tibet was convened by Dr Alex McKay at the International Institute for Asian Studies in Leiden, The Netherlands, September 12th and 13th 1996.

Reflecting interest in the subject over the past few years, this meeting gathered 12 scholars from several countries, belonging to various disciplines. The papers were dedicated to a variety of aspects of pilgrimage as their titles indicate:

Dr Wim van Spengen (University of Amsterdam): "Material Conditions of Tibetan Pilgrimage".
Pr Per Kvaerne (University of Oslo): "An Early Twentieth-Century Tibetan Pilgrim in India".
Dr Brigitte Steinmann (University of Montpellier): "The Opening of the sBas yul 'Bras mo'i gshongs According to the Chronicle of the Rulers of Sikkim: Pilgrimage as a Metaphorical Model of the Submission of Foreign Populations (Lepchas) by the Sa skya pa Conquerors".
Dr Elisabeth Stutchbury (Australian National University): "Pumo Kuluta; the Story of a Contested Site".
Dr Katia Buffetrille (E.P.H.E. Paris): "Some Reflections on Pilgrimages to Sacred Mountains, Lakes and Caves".
Dr Andrea Loseries-Leick (University of Graz): "On the Sacredness of Mount Kailasa in the Indian and Tibetan Sources".
Dr Hanna Havnevik (University of Oslo): "The Pilgrimage of Jetsun Lochen Rinpoche (1865-1951)".
Pr W.M. Callewaert (K. University of Leuven): "May 1996: To Kailash via the Northern Route and Saparam".
Peng Wenbin (South West Nationalities College, Chengdu): "Tibetan Pilgrimage in the Process of Social Changes: The Case of Kiuzhaigou in Northwest Sichuan Province, PRC".

The subject of this dissertation is the study of social organisation in a Nepalese village through an analysis of the water management system. In this instance, irrigation is indeed a good entry point to understand the village's social organisation. Geographically, all the villagers' land holdings are within the irrigation work (40 hectares, irrigated by a six-kilometre-long canal on the hillside). Economically, these irrigated fields represent the primary agricultural resource. Socially, as will be demonstrated, water management reflects social units, relationships and group identities analogous to those observed in the community's daily life. The questions that arise concern the relationship between irrigation and society: to what extent does the organisation of irrigation reflect the elements of social organisation? How do social constraints impact on the technical aspects of the irrigation system? Does the irrigation system evolve at the same pace as society? Does the irrigation system reflect the evolution of social changes?

To answer these questions, a historical approach has been adopted and two main themes have been developed through this research. The first one relates to the construction, stemming from a local initiative, and the development of an irrigation system, from 1893 to the beginning of the twentieth century. In examining the history of the irrigation system, the focus is placed on the socio-economic conditions prevalent during that period (population, land use, agricultural products, political incentives, etc.) to permit an understanding of the logic regulating the system's management. In the prevailing environmental conditions, the analysis of the water distribution system reveals that the use of a water clock to determine individual water rights is not technically required. A comparative study of various distribution systems shows that this technology is not commonly used in Nepal. Its presence in this village is the result of adopting an irrigation technique in use in a neighbouring village. Moreover, this technique was imported to this area and is common in arid zones. This analysis emphasizes that a technical process must be considered within the context of the society.