

# ecological constraints on trans-himalayan trade in nepal

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Anthropologists have long recognised that economic organization is closely correlated with social relations, and it is therefore appropriate to consider the extent to which the type of trade so far described presupposes or conditions certain types of social structure. In doing so we are immediately faced by the question whether the pursuance of trade as a central economic activity produces certain social attitudes and arrangements, or whether people motivated by a specific outlook on life are more likely to achieve success in trading than communities conditioned by a different ideology (Fúrer-Haimendorf, 1975:287).

Dr. Haimendorf has presented in the above quote a succinct statement of one of the crucial theoretical questions in the anthropological study of trade, namely whether trade as an economic activity produces certain social arrangements, or whether a "specific outlook on life" produces success in trade. The problem of course goes beyond trade into the basic question of the inter-relationship between the form of a culture and the necessity of adapting to the restraints of the characteristics of the natural milieu; Haimendorf unquestionably favors explanations which are weighted toward the imposition of strictly cultural factors which he terms "outlook".

The concept of "social outlook" is a term which though seeming to explain everything, really explains nothing, if for no other reason than that one might ask how this "outlook" comes about. One, then, has to search farther than "outlook" to find a proper context for the study of trade in the Himalayas.

The reliance on trade as "a central economic activity" must be questioned at the start. All of the groups which Haimendorf mentions are farmers and keep animals in addition to being traders. The degree to which members of each of these groups relied on trade was by no means homogenous, and today many of these groups have altogether abandoned this trade. While some families of the Thakalis and the Sherpas (two of the most successful trading groups) were large-scale traders who devoted all of their time to trade, others continued to be full-time farmers or keepers of animals.

Even within single successful trading families not all members were traders, with some members devoting most of their time to other activities. Other groups mentioned traded only part of the year- so one must look upon trade as "a central activity" as being an ill-defined concept within the Himalayan context.

Haimendorf states that all Bhotia groups including the Sherpa have a "social system which allows wide scope for individual choice both in economic activities and the ordering of social relations" (Furer-Haimendorf, 1975:287). This is of course true, but it by no means reflects on the source of these features of the social system. One of the most important elements noted by Haimendorf is freedom from joint family control, but this is not a simple issue.

Although independence is encouraged, particularly through assuring each son's right to a share of the parental property, even if his activities differ greatly from the parent, it must be noted that this is common Hindu practice and is presently the legal norm in Nepal. Haimendorf's example might just as well encourage one to go into farming or work as a mountain guide as well as a trader.

The author's own work among the Thakali shows an even greater encouragement of independence. The Thakali originated in the Kali-Gandaki valley, about 250 km. northwest of Kathmandu, and lived at an altitude of about 8,000 ft. Since the trade across the northern border of Nepal was severely restricted in the early 1960's, this group has migrated mostly to urban and semi-urban areas in central and western Nepal, as well as continuing to inhabit and expand former trade outposts in smaller towns on western Nepalese primary, secondary and tertiary trade routes<sup>1</sup>.

Thakali informants claim that inheritance most closely follows a system common to the west, namely that the parent is free to leave property to any or all children as he sees fit. This leaves the son in an uncertain position in regard to his patrimony and encourages him to set off on his own at an early age, knowing that if he does well, he will be encouraged and aided by his parent.\* Coupled with this is the institution of dhikur (see Messerschmidt, 1973) a rotating credit system which provides capital for starting on new business ventures; in some cases independent of the parents, as well as the extended family, in others with the parent as one of many investors. The independence of Thakali women in business

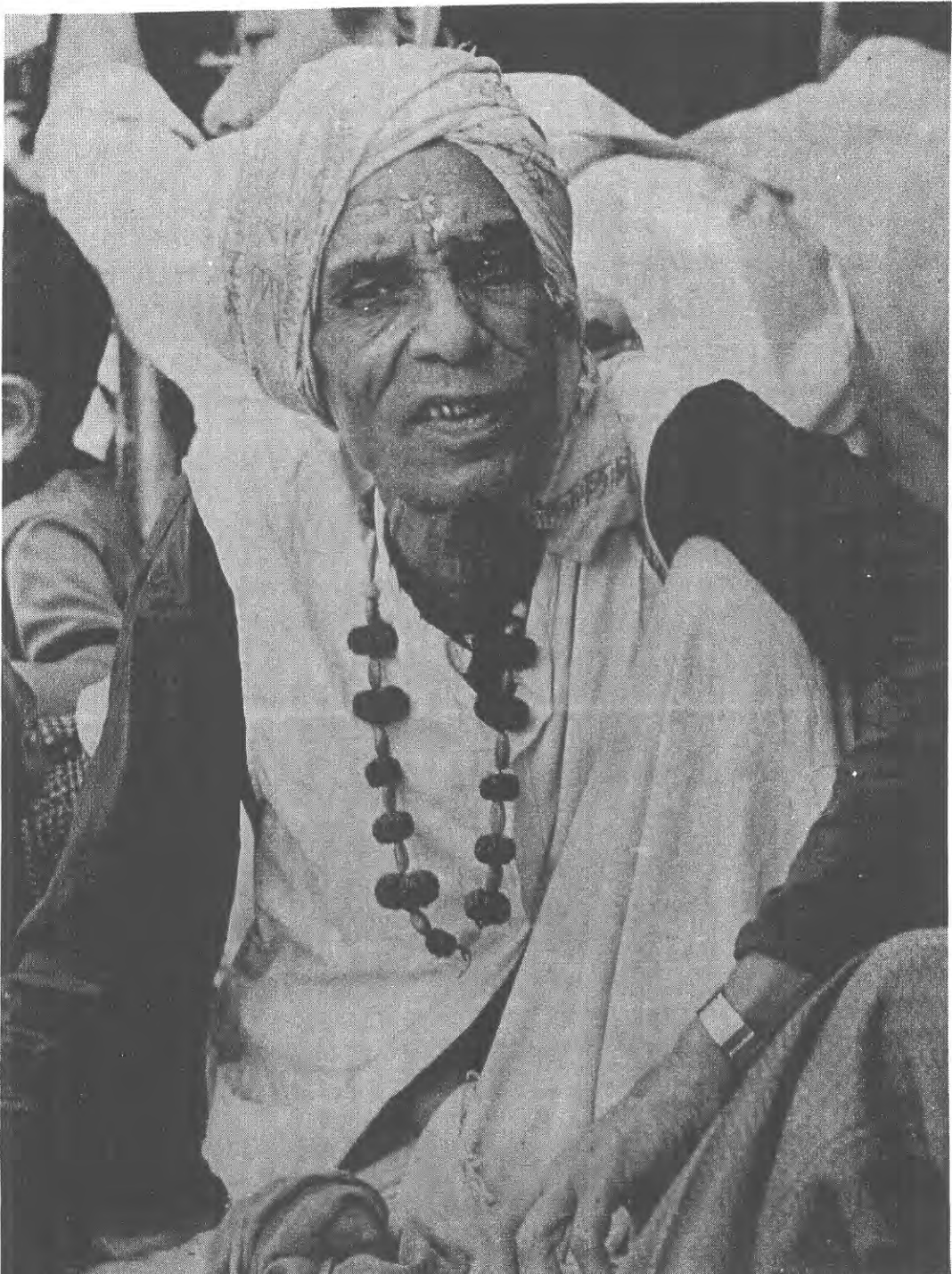
\* See note bottom page 79.

has been often noted as well (cf. Haimendorf, 1975:288, Okada, 1970:74 and Manzardo, 1976:2) setting up temporary inns (bhattis) along major trade routes and more permanent hotels in areas frequented by tourists (but in some of these cases the entire family, including the men take part in running the establishment).

The Sherpas have drastically cut their reliance on trade in recent years and have turned instead to tourism and mountaineering as their major sources of income (this has been very well described by Furer-Haimendorf in 1975:60-92). The Thakali as mentioned have been forced to drop their trans-Himalayan trade as well because of political events, yet the Thakali continue to trade in the lower hills and Tarai of Nepal as sellers and transporters of cloth, grain and other commodities. In order to facilitate their trade in the more competitive large bazaars such as Pokhara and Bhairawa, the Thakalis have formed protective societies (see Manzardo and Sharma, 1975) which place them in a position to compete against Newar and Marwari merchants in those areas. In addition, the Thakali outside of their home area in the upper Kali-Gandaki area, have begun to turn nominally to Hinduism. The history of this religious transformation has been discussed to some extent in Manzardo and Sharma, 1975, as well as in Bista, 1971, but essentially what happened is that Thakalis, beginning with Bal Bir Serchan in 1854, began to ally themselves with the central government in Kathmandu, gradually pulling themselves out of the zone of Tibetan cultural influence and hence Buddhism and more greatly identifying themselves with the Hindu Ranas. This gradually brought about certain reforms (notably the banning of the consumption of yak meat, identifying it with beef) which led to a growth in Hinduism. This identification with Hinduism is by no means uniform and certainly above Lete (in Mustang district, along the Kali-Gandaki) Buddhism is still influential<sup>2</sup>.

I bring up the question of Hinduism because Furer-Haimendorf's argument hinges on the effect of Hinduism on success in trade. Haimendorf feels that the "outlook" of the community determines its viability as traders. Assuming for the moment that the Sherpa and the Thakali were Buddhist at the time when trade was most active and that the Thakali acceptance of Hinduism was merely a later accommodation to the Hinduism of their new neighbors, Haimendorf feels that their Buddhist "outlook" allowed them to enjoy:

a freedom from the crippling restrictions which might impede relations with trading partners. Not bound by dietary taboos, or the ban on interdining with persons classed as socially inferior, he can accept hospitality wherever he goes and entertain in his own house anyone whose custom may be economically advantageous. On his far flung journeys he has not to confine himself to the type of food permitted by the rules of his caste, and can seek shelter wherever convenient without having to fear pollution by persons of lower ritual status (Furer-Haimendorf, 1975: 288-289).





A Thakali Buddhist Trungpa in Pokhara.

It is here that we come to the heart of the matter. Is it Hinduism that is the essential factor determining the success or failure of a group as traders, or are there perhaps other less obvious factors at work? In other words, are the effects of "specific outlook" more apparent than real? In order to approach this question let us look at how essential Haimendorf considers this outlook is to the existence of trading groups. Haimendorf discusses groups of Hindu Thakuris and Matwali Chhetris who live and trade side-by-side with the Bhotia populations living in Humla. He mentions that their skill in animal husbandry and their handling of pack animals does not differ markedly from that of the Bhotias. What he does not mention is how these traders overcome their "crippling restrictions", nor whether these restrictions have any effect on their trade whatsoever. He does note, however, that neither the Bhotias of the region nor the Hindus are true "mercantile entrepreneurs". The fact that the trade is not as profitable as that of the Thakali says nothing about the skill of either group and if anything their survival in the area points to some measure of success, for unlike the Kali-Gandaki valley, there is no proximity to large markets and the passage is far from easy. Yet, he feels that the Hindu adoption of the trading pattern of their Bhotia neighbors (itself a moot point) does not invalidate the hypothesis. We'll leave the point for now, but it is essential.

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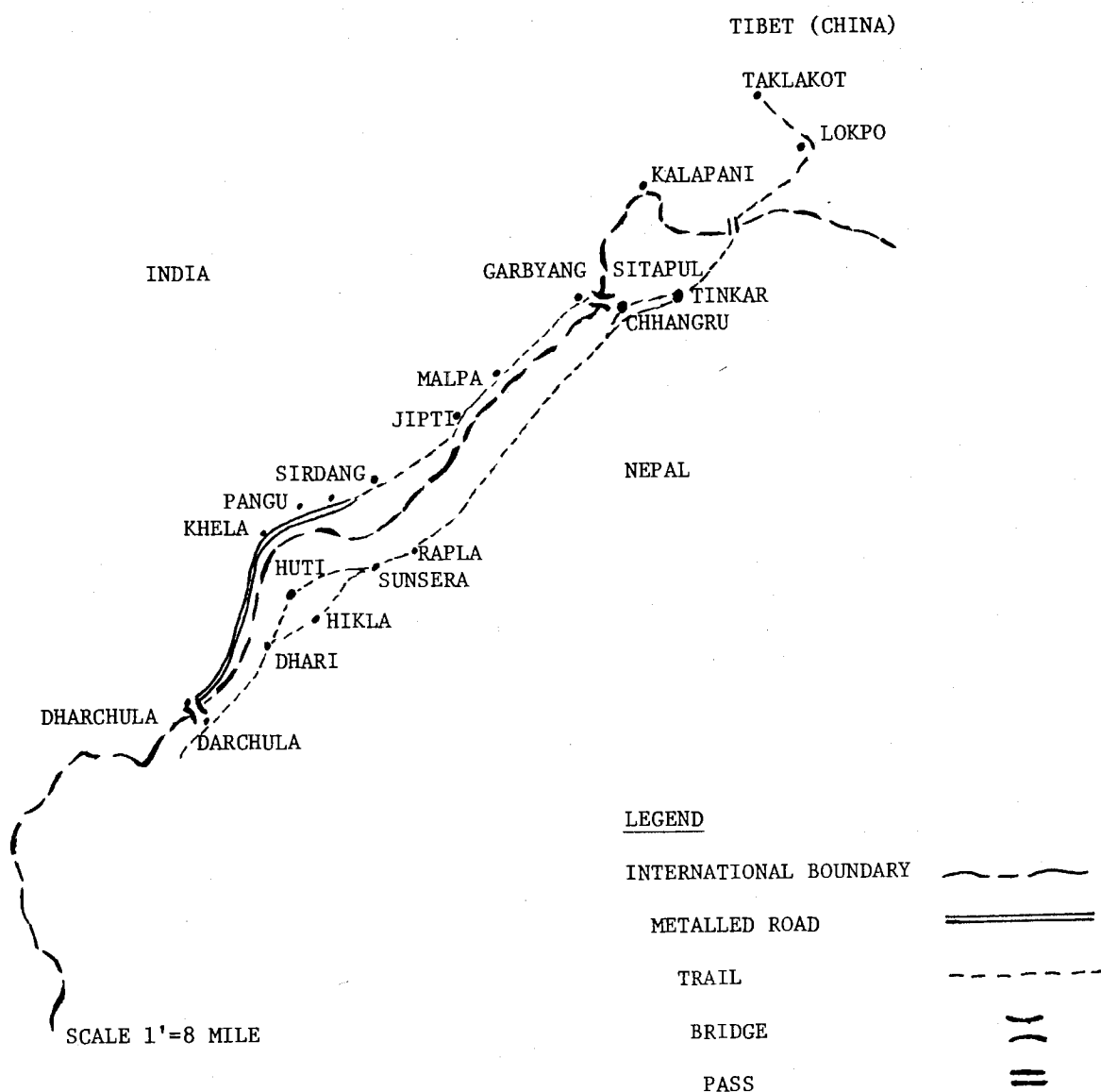
A Thakali sadhu or Hindu ascetic in Pokhara.

A similar situation exists in Darchula in far western Nepal, as well, where the Byanshi, a group which fits Haimendorf's classic pattern of a trading group, except for the fact that it claims to be Hindu (c.f. Manzardo, Rai, Dahal, 1976:83-118) and has been Hindu for some time. Several other nearby high caste Hindu groups also undertake trans-Himalayan trade going to such areas as Taklakot to trade the same goods as the Byanshi along what is generally the same route. The Byanshi, even though they are what Dr. Haimendorf would call Bhotia<sup>3</sup> are still Hindus and in spite of their Hindu "outlook" are quite successful traders. The other Hindu groups are failing to a certain extent.

At first glance, a purely cultural argument could be made, stating that in spite of the Byanshis' nominal Hinduism (which does differ markedly from the Hinduism of the high caste traders) the basic cultural elements of the Bhotias (or Buddhists, if you will) which allow maximum cultural flexibility remain, hence giving the Byanshi the advantage. The Byanshi do retain some of the features noted in both Thakali and Sherpa society, namely the nebulous freedom from joint family control as nuclear families are formed at marriage through neolocal marriage patterns, women are encouraged to create their own sources of income and larger than family cooperative ventures are formed. The Byanshi, in spite of the fact that they live in nuclear families, tend to re-form the extended family for purposes of trade. Members of the extended family will cooperate by pooling both animal and financial resources for the purpose of launching a successful trading expedition. All members of the extended family will sometimes invest money on a single venture and even though the initial investments might differ radically in amount, after the expedition, after each member's initial investment has been recovered, what remains is shared equally. This therefore makes it possible for poorer members of an extended family to make a larger profit and thus paradoxically allows him a greater financial independence from the extended family in the future. Although these nuclear families are separate economic entities, the extended family's flocks are kept together as well.

This demonstrates that flexibility can be achieved by more than one means. Actually what gives the Byanshi the advantage is a totally different set of outside circumstances. There are essentially two routes from

the market town of Darchula-Kalenga to Taklakot (see map below). One route, (the easier route) crosses into India to Garbyang and returns through Nepal at Sitapul to the north. On this route the road is wide and can accommodate yak-cattle hybrids (dzoba) and other large animals (such as mules). The other route remains on the Nepal side, going through Rapla directly to Chhangru. North of Rapla, the road becomes difficult and can only accommodate a single line of sheep. The route through India traverses a military restricted zone, and access is difficult to obtain.



The Indian authorities allow the Byanshi to use the easier route because their homeland lies in the rainshadow north of the Himalayas and because they must transport many of their household items south in the winter to avoid the cold and again north in the summer to utilize their agricultural land. The route through Nepal is too small to permit the transport of the migrant's goods, therefore the Indians allow the use of the restricted route. This is at least the given reason. The Byanshi take advantage of this privilege and use this route for trade with Tibet, since it is often difficult to distinguish household goods and grain from trade goods. The high caste Hindu traders who live south of the Himalayas are unable to use this route at all. These traders are therefore forced to take the less profitable route and hence are falling behind. Thus the cultural argument masks a less apparent, but more satisfactory economic explanation.

Byanshi traders are successful in spite of their Hinduism and this leads one to think that either the problem of pollution is not as essential to the matter as Haimendorf feels, or that the Hinduism of the traders is not as rigid as Haimendorf feels it to be. More information on the trading behavior of the Humla Thakuris would be essential to this discussion, but since this is not available let us return to the trading Hindus (non-Byanshi) in Darchula. The author and his co-worker ( a Rai, a Hindu of lower caste standing than his hosts ) visited a family of these traders in Hikla Panchayat and although they were not given access to the hearth (chulo), they were entertained by the family and slept in the house on many occasions. This example was repeated in other houses as well and even though it doesn't answer whether the adoption of the trading adaptation creates the relaxed atmosphere (for when something is essential, even in a strict Hindu situation, ways can be found to do them and still maintain purity) or whether the basic system is less rigid than Haimendorf feels it to be, the result is the same. Correct trading behavior can be maintained and to my feeling, by Dr. Haimendorf's own example, maintained successfully whether in a Buddhist or Hindu social system. One finds a strong emphasis on northern trade in the literature on trans-Himalayan trade, but there is seldom any emphasis placed on the southern sectors of the trade. With the Thakali wool trade for example, the northern aspects (i.e. the Tibetan sector) have been well covered and much discussion of Tibetan trading methods has been produced. For example:



Those Sherpas and Bhotias who travelled widely in Tibet were accustomed to a system of hospitality ideally suited to the needs of long distance traders not only in need of shelter in an inclement climate but dependent for their business on relationships of personal trust established by occasions for conviviality. They maintained this same tradition in their houses and dispensed hospitality not only to further their business contacts but also as a means of building up their social prestige (Fürer-Haimendorf, 1975:289).

This is an accurate analysis of Tibetan and Bhotia business practice in Tibet, but to a certain extent it is a statement of business practice in general and the fact remains that the entrepreneur was a middleman between two disparate economic zones and the second southerly zone is Hindu. The Sherpa, Thakali or Byanshi trader must therefore trade with Hindus, where in spite of the more egalitarian qualities of Buddhist fellowship, the problems of pollution do enter and the man who can pass himself off as having some Hindu status has a marked advantage. In the middle hills the Thakali attempts at achieving this Hindu status now begins to make sense. The Byanshi adoption of Hinduism also makes sense, for the Buddhists in Taklakot will accept them, even if they are Hindu (especially if that Hinduism is not particularly rigid), but as Hindus, these traders have an advantage in the south.

The Thakali sold wool to the Ludhiyana Punjabis and bought grain from the Chhetris (high caste Hindus) in the middle hills. Here trust, social prestige and conviviality were necessary as well, but the rules were different and the trading system was adapted to fit the needs of the situation. If the Thakalis were unable to sleep in the houses of their trading partners, they built bhattis; particularly in the more important trading towns such as Baglung, Tatopani, Birethanti and Pokhara. These bhattis are not the temporary structures described by Haimendorf, but rather are substantial houses, many of which have been standing for three generations or more. These houses were built initially to house the traders on their journeys outside of Thak Kholā. If trading partners were difficult to deal with, this was solved by having a Thakali male live permanently in the bhatti, nominally running small store on the premises, but actually acting as a trading agent for the larger more mobile traders travelling on the road. This "shopkeeper" became part of the local town, partaking in all local activities and following local customs. He usually adopted the local religion as well<sup>4</sup>.



A Thakali woman and her older sister's daughter taken on the porch of her house and bhatti in Ulla Sikka.

All of the elements of conviviality described by Haimendorf were undertaken by this agent on a daily basis. His bhatti became a social focal point, with members of all castes (usually at different times of the day) coming to drink tea or liquor and discuss their problems, tell jokes or seek help (often financial). Goods were sold on credit, but the store was usually of secondary importance and often concealed the warehouse of the large-scale trade. At harvest time, the bills were collected in the form of grain and the traders came through and collected it. The prestige of the local trader rubbed off (halo effect) on any of the local trader's honored guests (usually the Thakali long-distance trader). Hence, even in a very different social system, the trader can be successful. Most essential to the argument, however, is that what is an advantage in one social system is not necessarily an advantage in another and the dual nature (two ecological zones, two culture systems) must always be kept in mind.

Let us return to an essential point that we have left hanging, namely the adoption of the Bhotia trading patterns by the Thakuris and Matwali traders of Humla. The essential point of the argument is here and with talk of "cultural outlooks", the thread of the argument has been lost in Haimendorf. In the beginning of the

chapter, Haimendorf presents an ecological argument which if taken up without side issues provides the answer to a good many questions:

The dependence of the Bhotias of the Himalayan highlands is neither of their own choosing nor is it the result of historic accident. A self-contained peasant economy based on agriculture and animal husbandry could not be sustained by the natural resources of valleys lying above 10,000 feet, and even below that level larger concentrations of populations could grow only where the income from trade supplements the yield from subsistence farming (Fúrer-Haimendorf, 1975:286).

From this statement we must assume that the Matwali Chhetri and the Thakuri are traders, not because they wish to imitate the Bhotias, but because they must be traders in order that they may continue to live in the region. This means that trade, even in this very difficult area is a matter of survival not temperament. Since the groups have survived, we must assume even without data, that the group has been able to overcome any limitations placed on it by any caste-purity requirements. Further proof for an ecological basis for the trading adaptation comes from the examples of the Thakali and the Byanshi. The Thakali lived at an altitude of just over 8,000 feet, but they lived in the arid Himalayan rainshadow. As a consequence, in spite of two crops a year, they were unable to provide sufficient food for their own yearly needs. The Gurungs of Parbat, however, living between 5,000 and 7,000 feet, inhabit a region south of the rainshadow and even though they are close to the Thakali both culturally and linguistically in many ways, they were able to produce sufficient food and never became traders. The Byanshi of Tinkar and Chhangru (the Byanshi trading groups of Nepal) live at 13,000 feet for part of the year and produce only one crop of buckwheat. These populations resort to trade to supplement their income. Byanshi living at Rapla (roughly 7,000 feet) however, are able to produce enough food each year and although they are thought to belong to the same ethnic group, they are not traders. Therefore, we can assume that there is an element of necessity in the trade adaptation<sup>5</sup>.



Two Byanshi traders setting out their wares in Dhap in Darchula District.

As to the success of groups as traders and to the size and nature of their enterprises, this is merely a matter of access and control of good trade routes and good markets. If a road is not good, and a better road exists, the skill of local traders will not keep trade travelling along the bad road for very long<sup>6</sup>. Trade obviously tends to go along the easiest routes to the best markets, if one has control of that route, one becomes a large scale entrepreneur, if one does not, one remains small no matter how skillful. The Thakali put much effort into obtaining monopolistic rights over the Kali-Gandaki trade route during the Rana period for just this reason (c.f. Manzardo, Sharma, 1975). The recent advantage of the Byanshi over the high caste Hindu traders in Darchula is another case in point.

The question of the role played by ecological and geographic factors is also relevant to Haimendorf's next question:

Yet there remains a problem to be solved. In the conduct of their trans-Himalayan trade Sherpas, Bhotias, Thakalis and Taralis alike have depended not only on the salt provided by their Tibetan partners but equally on the grain they bought from the cultivators of Nepal's middle hills, be they Rais, Magars or Chetris ... why, we might ask

are there no Rai merchants who buy up the rice of their village and deal with the great traders of Namche on equal terms, and why have Chetri counterparts of the merchant princes of Tukucho not monopolized the grain trade in the lower Kali-Gandaki valley (Fürer-Haimendorf 1975:290).

The author rejects Dr. Haimendorf's analysis, namely that societies which place a high premium on the ownership of land leave little incentive for commercial activities, for the Thakalis themselves are often large landowners and the Hindus are by no means landed gentry, but engage in many commercial activities such as stores and trade and transport on secondary trails in the lower hills. There is no feeling of trade being somehow a distasteful activity. Nor do the networks of caste and family obligations present a threat, rather they are a potential network of contacts and trusted allies for the furthering of trade (as demonstrated by the Thakali maintenance of such networks) within the geographical limits of these social networks. It is merely a question, rather, of such a grain monopoly not being profitable enough in the lower hills to be worth the effort. In the case of the Thakalis, grain is gathered from many places in the hills. If a local Chhetri gathers all the grain from one locality and raises the price, the Thakalis simply don't buy from him and the local merchant is forced to find a place to store his surplus (a costly undertaking where land and building material are in short supply and where the grain must be protected from vermin). Since this is not possible, the merchant may make a small profit, but not enough to be worth the effort of buying the grain. In order to extend his monopoly to a larger area, the merchant must pay for both storage and transport of the larger quantities of grain. This raises his costs and lowers his profits and if the Thakalis choose, they can buy elsewhere or not at all. The merchant in this case is soon bankrupt and the locals will not have trade goods and therefore will be hostile to him and again sell directly to the Thakali. In order to transport sufficient quantities of grain to matter, it is necessary for the merchant to have access to transport animals and here is where the crux of the ecological argument comes. The cost of human transport is greater than the cost of animal transport, yet the porter is a ubiquitous sight on trails in the middle hills. This is because there is little pasture space in this area. Local pasturage is utilized for goats, buffalo and cattle. Mules and horses are seldom kept. Sheep must be kept at high altitude and what few are

kept, in the Sikkha region for example (in Parbat district) are brought up to the Thakali pastures in the summer where they are kept for a fee. Since animal transport is unavailable locally, human transport must be used. If our hypothetical merchant gathered all the grain by human means, his price would be higher than the Thakali price gathering the same amount of grain by animal. Our merchant has no animals, hence he cannot compete. The Thakali have animals, because even though they have little cultivatable land, they have an abundance of pasturage (demonstrated by the fact that they rent it out). The advantage of the Thakalis and the Bhotia groups in general lies not in "social outlook", but in having access to trade routes and transport animals and the necessity of having to use both to survive. Our hypothetical merchant therefore lacks the means to use the trade route, even if he lives on it further to the south. Most important is that the greatest share of the profit in trade lies not in gathering the grain together, but in transporting it to where the market is paying a high price. Hence the merchant is trying to get a good price where the supply is high, while the Thakali, or Sherpa or Thakuri trader gets his high price where the supply is low and the demand high. The local Thakali merchant, however, is part of the trade network and therefore gets a share of the ultimate profit at the point of sale. The advantage of the Thakali therefore lies not in his independence, but rather in his linkages the very network that Haimendorf calls a disadvantage for the Hindu villager<sup>7</sup>.

Therefore, trading groups are ultimately a product of certain adaptations to ecological factors in the area in which the group is trying to survive. First, is the inability for the group to produce sufficient food within the area in which they are living. This necessitates creating, as it were, an income from the outside. One of the means of doing so is trade, but this is only possible where an economic differential (such as between Tibet and Nepal) exists and where there are definite markets and routes between them. When even one of these elements is missing, trade cannot exist and other solutions must be found<sup>8</sup>. These solutions are improvements in local agriculture, temporary migration (either long-term, such as joining the army or short-term, such as seeking temporary work elsewhere - c.f. Manzardo, Rai, Dahal: 1977) or permanent migration. Where the markets and roads are good, the profit is high and generally the capital base

of the group is large enough for high-risk activities to take place (see Manzardo, 1976), hence the group tends to become entrepreneurial. Where the markets are marginal or the routes difficult, the trading group remains as marginally small traders. In addition to and essential to this situation in the Himalaya, is the pairing of this agriculturally poor area with an area with high pastoral potential. This pairs the necessity to trade with the ability to trade larger amounts profitably. Without these animals, transport is expensive and the quantities small. It is these factors, rather than factors of "social outlook" that determine the success or failure of a group as long-distance traders, for each group adapts the advantages of its own social structure to the necessities of the way of life. This is particularly true in the Himalaya where trade takes place between two culture areas creating a necessity for the successful middlemen to take into account two sets of value systems.

#### FOOTNOTES

1. By a primary trade route, I mean one where main markets and entrepots are interconnected. One such route is the route between Jomosom and Butwal, along the Kali-Gandaki river in western Nepal. A secondary trade route connects smaller market towns where agricultural goods are collected and sent to entrepots in the primary route. Tertiary routes are likewise routes which connect the agricultural sources with the smaller market towns. The main indicators between these types of route are noticeable in differences in the size of loads, variety of goods carried in loads and the frequency of travel on the routes. c.f. Bista, 1971, Jest, 1966, Manzardo, 1976, Manzardo and Sharma, 1975 for further information on the Thakali.
2. Thakali lamas are to be found in Pokhara, but have little influence here. Their social influence begins to be felt in Parbat, where the Gurungs are nominally Buddhist as well. The lamas of this region are for the most part Panchgaunli (from a more traditionally Buddhist area just north of the Thakali homeland). In Thak Khola, several monasteries still exist, although for the most part they are little used. Hence there is an increase in Buddhist influence on a line extending from Pokhara to Mustang. Certain Thakali families

were more closely allied with the old trade monopolies, hence with the central government and Hinduism, but there is confusion, so one family in Jomosom has a house with Hindu artifacts, but the daughter is a Buddhist nun.

3. Groups are often termed "Bhotia" or "Bhotiya" in the literature to distinguish them from the Khasya groups which comprise the present high caste groups of the hills. The term "Bhotiya" is used to describe "Mongoloid Tibeto-Burman and culturally distinct people of the higher Himalayas" (Berreman, 1972:14). These groups should be distinguished from Bhote" which is a Nepali term for people specifically of Tibetan descent living in Nepal.
4. Both Buddhism and Hinduism seem to have been adopted for the sake of good relations with their neighbors. The essential nucleus of belief of the Thakali has always centered around ancestor cult practices and this remains unchanged in spite of great changes in both Hindu and Buddhist practice.
5. See Rai, Manzardo and Dahal 1976 for a discussion of this in terms of the high caste traders from Hikla. The Byanshi of Rapla do not intermarry with the Byanshi of Byans panchayat, to our knowledge, hence strengthening the theoretical relationship between marriage and trade networks.
6. For a discussion of just such an attempt by the Gurungs to force a change in a local trade route see Messerschmidt and Gurung, 1974.
7. It must be noted that even though the present tense has been used for convenience in the discussion of Thakali salt grain trade, the trade has been discontinued. Hence our merchant cannot even begin.
8. An exception to this model is the Newars, a group of traders originating in the Kathmandu valley, found today throughout the hills and Tarai of Nepal. There are both Hindu and Buddhist members in this group and far from being marginal agriculturally, this group has, in the valley at least, the richest farmland in Nepal's hills. The Newars, however, are a highly urbanized group and as usual, ecological models break down once urbanization cuts the tenuous link between man and his environment. As Haimendorf points out, however, the Newars do not



undertake strenuous trans-Himalayan trade expeditions and prefer to run semilinked retail establishments, both in the primary bazaar towns such as Doti, Pokhara, Narayanghat, Dhankuta and so on, or in secondary bazaars which are supplied from the primaries. Large traders exist, but these prefer to speculate in commodities either in Kathmandu or in the trade between India and Nepal, i.e. the largest markets. Haimendorf also points out that competition between Newars and Thakalis usually results in the Thakali gaining the advantage, but again this is not due so much to "social outlook" as to differences in business practice due to the differences in both the origins of the trade adaptation and the reason for continuing trade. The Newar businessman is used to the individual competition of the large bazaar market, while the Thakali tend to co-operate with each other to a large extent, forming organizations of self-regulation such as the Thakali Social Reform Organization (see Manzardo and Sharma, 1975). This banding together on the part of the Thakali represents a strengthening of the middle hills sector of their old trade network, using traditional means of organization to improve their competitive advantage. This was made necessary by the Thakali having to abandon their old trade patterns and in effect follow their old network south, migrating to a point where they could make a living (see Manzardo 1976). Individual Newar families, however, still tend to compete with each other, operating on a local, retail level and therefore do not have the complex linkages between wholesale, transport and retail possessed by the Thakali. Hence in the competitive situations found in places like Pokhara, Baglung, Galkot and Birethanti, the Newars have either lost out or are fighting a losing battle. Hence even in this case, the "social outlook" argument is not convincing, even though an ecological argument is not sufficient.

\*Author's note: Subsequent research has shown that the most common form of inheritance among the Thakali is the "equal shares for all male heirs" system, the most prevalent form in Nepal.

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