

Local Development: Grasses and People in Royal Chitwan National Park, Nepal. *Environmental Conservation* 15: 143-148.

Mishra, H.R. 1982. Balancing Human Needs and Conservation on Nepal's Royal Chitwan National Park. *Ambio* 6: 246-257.

Mishra, H.R. 1990. A Wild World that is no More. *Himal Sept./Oct.*: 14-15.

Müller-Böker, Ulrike 1991a. Ethnobotanical Studies among the Citawan Tharus. *Journal of the Nepal Research Center* 9. In Press.

Müller-Böker, U. 1991b. Knowledge and Evaluation of the Environment in Traditional Societies of Nepal. *Mountain Research and Development* 11 (2): 101-114.

Oldfield, H.A., 1880 *Sketches from Nepal*. 2 Vols. (Reprint 1974) Delhi.

Regmi, M.C. 1976. *Landownership in Nepal*. Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press.

Regmi, M.C. 1978. *Thatched Huts and Stucco Palaces. Peasants and Landlords in 19th Century Nepal*. New Delhi.

Spillett, J.J. 1967. A Report on the Wildlife Surveys in Northern India and Southern Nepal. January - June 1966. *Journal of Bombay Natural History Society* 63 (3): 492-628.

Stracey, P.D. 1957. On the Status of the Great Indian Rhinoceros (*R. unicornis*) in Nepal. *Journal of Bombay Natural History Society* 54: 763-766.

INTERVIEW

Reorientation at the Royal Nepal Academy: An interview with Vice-Chancellor Prof. Isvar Baral Martin Gaenzle

He refused to go to Princeton in the late fifties, because this would have committed him to the School of International Studies (SIS) in New Delhi, which had arranged for the scholarship, for a further five years - and he intended to go back to Nepal. The political changes in 1960, however, put an end to this plan, so he went to London to get his Ph.D. from SOAS and eventually stayed in Delhi, where he taught south Asian politics and the history of modern Nepal at the SIS (Jawaharlal Nehru University) for what came to be 34 years. For a long time he had been in the bad books of the

Panchayat system because of his democratic credentials, but last summer, after the restoration of multi-party democracy, when Prof. Isvar Baral came - as usual - to his home country for vacation, he was made Vice-Chancellor of the Royal Nepal Academy. (The post of Chancellor has remained vacant since the restructuring of the Academy).

When he wrote his doctoral thesis on *The Life and Writings of Prithvi Narayan Shah* in London under the supervision of the late T.W. Clark, he used the archives of the India Office Library and became - as he recounted - "the first

person in the world who has seen all the volumes of the Hodgson papers from cover to cover - and the first Nepali of course." Besides being a distinguished scholar in the fields of history and political science, Isvar Baral is well-known as an authority on Nepali literature (for example as editor of "Jhyālbāta", "Himālcūṭ", "Sayapati", "Mohan Koirā-lakā Kavita", etc.) - and as a writer. He is also a linguist, well versed in the Sanskrit language and literature, and speaks fluently Hindi, Maithili, Bengali and Bhojpuri.

Asked for the reasons for taking up his present post, Prof. Baral replied that it was his long-standing interest in history on the one hand, and literature on the other, that made the job attractive to him. He went on to explain that the Royal Academy is meant primarily for the development of five branches of knowledge: language, literature, culture (which includes history), art (painting, music and drama), and philosophy.

But later on he pointed out that at first he had had reservations: "I was not very enthusiastic in accepting this job, primarily because I have left a few things incomplete, writings: I have a plan of publishing about 15 books, 7 are in the last stage of completion. My plan was to retire early from Jawaharlal Nehru University and devote the rest of life to full time writing. Now I don't get the time. So this is a great loss to me, that is why I was not very enthusiastic. But secondly there was the challenge - the challenge to strengthen the foundations of democracy in the country through the activities of the Royal Academy."

This challenge was the central theme of our talk. When I asked him about the major changes in the set-up of the Academy, Prof. Baral first explained some administrative problems he faced:

"The first thing I had to do here was - how do we say? - spring cleaning." This implied stock-taking of previous commitments and liabilities. For example, bills for the printing of books had to be paid, which no longer reflected the policy of the Academy. The case of the employees had to be taken up, as there had been "anomalies" in their appointment, stagnation in their salaries and academic grading, etc. And thirdly, the financial situation had to be reviewed: as the government no longer provided a developmental fund of two million and the increment of salaries took up one million. The Academy faced a decrease of three million rupees in its budget.

We then turned to the question of restructuring the academic activities. What kind of shift had taken place in the orientation of the Academy's projects?

"We made certain innovations. First we included studies regarding different languages in the country, not only Nepali. Previously, only Nepali was being encouraged, only studies and books in Nepali were being published. And all the activities were related to the Nepali language. We modified that, and our activities now are related to other languages also."

Prof. Baral then went on to explain the newly started projects on four languages (other than Nepali): Limbu, Maithili, Bhojpuri and Newari (for details see below). Later on, he continued, other languages, such as Magar, Tamang, and Gurung, will be included in the programme.

A similar shift of emphasis has taken place in other activities, like the performance of dramas.

"Every year a drama festival was held here in which only Nepali dramas were staged for a week or so. So this time dramas in other languages also will be

staged. We included two languages this year, other than Nepali - Newari and Maithili. Next year we will include two other languages. So in this way all the languages will be given a chance as best as possible."

For this drama festival, which was scheduled for 26th September, already more than 150 scripts of non-professional drama groups, literary organisations etc. have been submitted. The best presentations will be awarded prizes.

Another change concerns the "research fellowships" awarded by the Academy. Previously, these fellowships were mostly given for creative writing, to essayists, poets, novelists. But now, true to their name, they will be strictly given for scientific and methodologically sound research only.

This does not mean, however, that creative writing will no longer be promoted. The Vice-Chancellor emphasized that the Academy will continue to support the publication of creative writing, ... "but they must be of a standard. Thus, if somebody wants to publish an anthology of poems, for example, it has to be seen what particular contribution these poems are going to make to the development of Nepali poetry."

Apart from such shifts in the emphasis new projects will also be introduced. In the beginning of February 1992 a Festival of the People (lokotsava) is going to be held, which is meant for the presentation of folk songs, "songs of the tribal people of different languages, not modern songs, only such songs which are part and parcel of the cultural life of the people." The plan is to group these presentations according to different genres, such as heroic ballads (like those of the Gaine), songs pertinent to women (like those sung on Tij), or relating to certain religious festivals, or

agricultural seasons etc. Asked whether these songs will also be recorded and published later, Prof. Baral affirmed that this is intended. Summing up he continued: "So we are trying our best at new things which previously had not been taken up. As you asked earlier, certainly I thought there would be very exciting things for me, to make innovations and to depart from the norm, the normal activities, and to contribute something to the cultural environment of the country. So I thought an opportunity had been given to me."

The "opening up" of the Royal Academy's activities to a wider field of interests also creates a bigger ground for possible collaboration with foreign scholars and institutions. When we came to that point towards the end of our talk Prof. Baral stressed the necessity to keep each other informed and initiate "mutual cooperation and an exchange of ideas."

(Interview held on 19th August, 1991)

Current and Projected Language Projects of the Royal Nepal Academy

Limbu

1. Study on Limbu Language, Literature and Culture: The major objective of this project is to collect materials on Limbu oral tradition and publish them in *devanāgarī* script with Nepali transliteration. Several books are in preparation: 1) short introduction to the Limbu language and literature (this is already completed and is to be published in 1992; 2) collection of folk songs and tales; 3) collection of proverbs and idioms (fieldwork for this will start in 1991-1992; 4) studies on the *mundhum* (one ritual text, sung by a *phe-*

dangma for the benefit of a pregnant mother and her expected child, has been recorded and edited by Vairagi Kahila and is presently in press).

2. Limbu-Nepali-English Dictionary:

This is a reedition of the dictionary which was originally compiled by I.S. Chemjong and published by the Academy (1961/62). The new edition will be revised and enlarged.

Chief editor: Vairagi Kahila

Committee: Dr. Subhadra Subba, Dr. Navel Kisor Rai, Bikram Ingwaba

Newari

History of Newari Literature (in Nepali). This will be the first comprehensive history of Newari writing covering the various periods and genres in the light of changing political contexts. The volume of approximately 700-800 pages is planned to be published in about three years.

Chief editor: Krishna Chandra Singh Pradhan

Committee: Narmadesvar Prasad Pradhan, Dr. Janak Man Vaidya, Kashinath Tamot, Madhav Lal Karmacharya.

Nepali

Dictionary of Literary Terms (in Nepali) The compilation of this dictionary is - among other things - intended to facilitate the understanding of and communication with the western tradition of literary history and criticism.

Chief editor: Krishna Chandra Singh Pradhan

Maithili

1. Maithili-Nepali Dictionary. The plan is to first publish a concise dictionary with about 35,000 entries. Later this will be enlarged up to 60,000 words or more. Three collectors will be deputed to three different areas in Nepal: one in Mahottari and Sarlahi, the second in Janakpur, the third will be in Siraha and Saptari (up to Rajbiraj). Thus, not only

standard Maithili, but also variant dialects (like those close to the border with Bhojpuri speakers) will be included, as long as different words are in usage. (If the difference is only in spelling, the standard spelling will be given).

Chief editor: Prof. Dr. Harideva Mishra
Committee: Prof. Ramawatar Yadav, Dr. A.N. Chaudhari, Dr. Bal Krishna Jha

2. Nepali-Maithili Dictionary. This dictionary is designed for Nepali speakers who want to learn the Maithili language. It will be based on dictionaries which are already published and therefore will not involve field-work. Later it will be supplemented by a grammar in Nepali.

Chief editor: Prof. Dr. Isvar Baral
Committee: Dr. Yogendra Yadav, Ram B. Kapadi, Dr. Rajendra Vimal

3. Representative Collection of Maithili Writings. An anthology will be prepared in two volumes, one focusing on prose, the other on poetry. The collection is intended to represent the whole history of Maithili literature from earliest times up to the present and will include various literary genres (also short-stories, essays, literary criticism, narrative poetry etc.) Use will also be made of manuscripts kept by the National Archives. The text will be presented with an introduction about the authors (as far as possible). A glossary of obsolete terms is to be attached.

Chief editors: Dr. Dhireswar Jha (Prose, Parameswar Prasad Singh (Poetry)

Bhojpuri

Grammar of Bhojpuri. For this project a committee has been formed with Prof. Isvar Baral as president and Dhanush Chandra Gautam, Jagdish Sharma, Uma Shankar Dvivedi and Dr. Dhruva Chandra Gautam as members.