

think I should share my experience in life with succeeding generations. Not because I have been a great success, or anything of the kind, but only because I have lived turbulently and have had a rather adventurous life. I have married in the Rana family. We have been Khans or Shahas. We belong to one of the Twenty-Four Principalities in the Gandaki basin. And, for good or bad, I came to be associated with the popular

political movements. Which here played a critical role in our country's recent history. As a gadfly, you can say. But I have had some role and I have seen the working of politics and government in Nepal from both the inside and the outside. I think my fellow-countrymen at present and in the future would profit by my experiences and learn from my mistakes and failures.

RESEARCH PROJECTS

Group projects:

The Senate of the German Research Council (DFG) approved in 1991 the following major research programme: Settlement Processes and State Formation in the Tibetan Himalayas.

To be investigated in a border region characterized by high altitude and aridity is the relationship between settlement processes and the emergence and decline of states. The interdisciplinary project, with its aims defined largely by the humanities, was stimulated by tibetologists and architectural historians, extended further by specialists from the fields of settlement archeology and historical settlement geography and methodologically completed by specialists from natural and engineering sciences (dendrochronology and photogrammetry/Cartography). The research hypotheses apply to the entire area of the Tibetan Himalayas, but the planned field studies shall concentrate for the time being on the pass and transit landscape of Mustang in northern Nepal. This research strategy was decided upon both for reasons of accessibility for fieldworkers and for the fact that, in contrast to Chinese administered Tibet, the Tibetan culture has been handed down unbroken and is still alive and developing in Mustang.

The first phase of the programme will last six years. The coordinators are: Prof. Dr. Dieter Schuh (Universität Bonn) and Prof. Dr. W. Haffner (Universität Gießen).

Individual projects:

Travelling to Buddhist Holy Centers: The Case of Sherpa Pilgrimages

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According to recent empirical research as well as theoretical discussion, pilgrimage represents a distinct kind of ritual performance. The pilgrimages leave behind the structured world of everyday life for a limited period of time in order to overcome the physical hardships and psychic strains of their journey. Thus the process of pilgrimage seems to favour the emergence of conditions which may temporarily give rise to new forms of social interaction while crossing ethnic, social and religious boundaries. The main part of the investigation will consist of systematically observing these interactions with reference to three geographically varying case studies: a local pilgrimage, a regional pilgrimage and a supra-regional pilgrimage. It is assumed that the various differences between these three varieties of Sherpa Buddhist pilgrimage may give insight into the multiple forms of social interaction and organization which can emerge in the course of the pilgrimage process.

The three case stories are:

1. The study of local pilgrimages: the case of holy mountains and lakes. In their own locality the Sherpas worship various holy mountains and lakes.

These places can be the aim of local pilgrimages during summertime. It takes usually three to four days of travelling by foot. For Buddhists holy mountains here a double meaning. On the one hand there are to be considered as the home of a god to be worshipped, usually the tutelary god of the locality. On the other hand they represent a god whose locally framed power reaches as far as the mountain can be perceived from afar. Very often a holy mountain exists in combination with a holy lake being regarded as the representation of a goddess and also of her dwelling. There god and goddess are imagined to live together in eternal harmony. This type of pilgrimage performed in August happens to remain within the boundaries of their familiar geographical horizon. Other Bhotia people can be met.

2. Regional pilgrimage: the case of Halase. An important pilgrimage centre on the regional level is situated at Halase in the vicinity of Okhaldhunga. It is a cave in which according to Buddhist tradition the famous tantric saint Guru Padmasambhava who is said to have introduced Buddhism to Tibet once had spent time of retreat. The course of this regional pilgrimage leads through the territory of different ethnic groups and attracts pilgrims of diverse origin who have to manage to get along with each other. The month of pilgrimage is February.

3. Supra-regional pilgrimages: the case of Bodhnath. Bodhnath is situated about six km northeast of Kathmandu in the area in which the most formidable growth of Buddhism in whole South Asia can be found. In the Kathmandu Valley there exists an extraordinary number of important Buddhist places of

pilgrimage. However, Buddhists regard the two biggest stupas in this area, Swayambunath and Bodhnath, as the most important ones. Being constructed in the 5th and 6th Centuries A.D., a considerable mythological tradition is connected with each of them. Swayambunath situated on a hill west of Kathmandu is the older sacred complex, but Bodhnath constituting a holy centre of its own built in the characteristic shape of a mandala seems to be better suited for the intended study.

Since many centuries Bhotia people from Sikkim, Bhutan, Tibet, and the Nepalese Himalayas come to Bodhnath to stay over the fairly mild winter, to trade and to worship the deities at the important shrines and at the stupa by prayer, circumambulation, etc. Most of them use to dwell in the houses surrounding the stupa or in the numerous monasteries of the locality. From here they visit other Buddhist places in the valley.

The pilgrimage provides further possibilities for the fusing of religious and secular motives (trade and tourism). Thus the supra-regional type of pilgrimage offers important insights into the diverse aspects of change in combination with the recent growth of Buddhism in this part of the Himalayas. The winter from December to February is regarded as the pilgrimage season.

Socio-Economic Conditions of the Terai (Madhesiya) Community in Nepal

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Organization Carrying the Study: Centre for Economic and Technical Studies (CETS), Post Box 3174, Kathmandu, Nepal.

Sponsor: Friedrich-Ebert Foundation (Germany)

The above study is being conducted with the following objectives: 1. To access the problem of the *madhesiya* community in regard to the manifestation of their language, culture and identity. 2. To analyze the nature of participation of the *madhesiya* community in the different political and administrative assignments as well as in the different line ministries and corpora-

tions. 3. To review the impact on the *madhesiya* community of the migration of the people to this area from the hills. 4. To find out the income and expenditure pattern of the *madhesiya* community. 5. To suggest measures for integrating the *madhesiya* community in the national mainstream and also to improve their socio-economic status.

Work for conducting the above study began in February 1992 and will be completed in August.