

Finally, the book contains a well-documented section dedicated to the temporal role of Caughera monastery, i.e. its economic and administrative relations both with the Nepalese state and its own dependants, particularly in the framework of the *guthi* attached to the religious institution. Bouillier emphasizes that the very particular religious situation of the monastery did not result in a juridical exception, as compared with other religious institutions. Considering the formulation of the numerous legal documents presented here, my feeling is that they do not differ from those concerned with secular circles. Thus it seems to me that the political status of this particular monastery in Gorkhali and Rana Nepal may be compared not only to the status of other *guthis* but also to that of the dominant Bahun-Chetri lineages, on which the Nepalese state definitely lay.

*Development, Society and Environment in Tibet: Papers presented at a panel of the 7<sup>th</sup> Seminar of the International Association for Tibetan Studies* edited by Graham E. Clarke. Vienna, 1998. 199pp.

Reviewed by Perdita Pohle

The proceedings of the 7<sup>th</sup> Seminar of the International Association for Tibetan Studies held at Schloss Seggau in Graz in 1995 are published in a total of seven volumes which contain a selection of the total of 228 papers read at this conference. Apart from the general volumes (Vol. I - II, ed. by H. Krasser, M.T. Much, E. Steinkeller, H. Tauscher, 1997) the papers presented at special panels are published in five separate volumes (Vol. III - VII) edited by their respective chairpersons. Graham E. Clarke of Oxford University was one of the organizers of a panel session which focused on economic, social, and environmental changes in Tibet. He prepared and edited the volume reviewed here.

Because our knowledge of contemporary Tibet is still very modest and the country itself is only partially open to international researchers, the papers presented in this volume are of an extraordinarily high value. They introduce original case studies of social and environmental change in Tibet undertaken by experienced Western, Tibetan, and Chinese scholars. In addition to empiri-

cal data collected during extensive field research, primary statistical data are also reviewed. By taking both qualitative and quantitative approaches, the papers are able to give a representative analysis of the present situation in Tibet.

The volume begins with an essay by the editor which provides a comprehensive introduction to the subject matter of the volume. In this he links Tibet and its special political and environmental situation to the broader context of a more intellectual debate on development issues and environmental problems. Starting with a brief historical account of cultural and economic linkages between Tibet, China, and the wider world, the author points out the extent to which changes in Tibet and China have to be taken as part of a universal process of development, especially during this century. Whether these are the Western ideas of material progress and economic growth bringing general human betterment that were promoted after World War II, or the environmentalist ideas about conservation, balance, and survival alongside nature that arose in the late 1960s—almost all of these ideas have influenced and still are influencing Tibet's development. However, a question arises about the way in which and the degree to which China has introduced its particular cultural and political vision of modernity to the ecological particularities of highland Tibet and its special socio-cultural and demographic situation. Considering economic modernity, the author critically points out that Western-derived models of economic growth do not fit with the special environmental and socio-cultural situation in Tibet. Tibet is not a temperate lowland with a high agricultural production, nor does it have a high population density with a high capacity for human institutions. Also, it has no coastal access, there is no possibility of low-cost infrastructure for transport and communication, nor is there open access to markets and flows of information. In spite of this, Tibet has its own civilization with a complex of values and institutions which do not always centre on material need. With regard to the rise of Western ideas of environmentalism in contradiction to the ideas of material progress, Clarke points out that there is a belief among several Western groups that Eastern philosophies such as Buddhism lead people to live in harmony with nature. Underlying this belief is the issue of the degree to which different cultures predispose different environmental attitudes and behaviours. According to the author, this issue has to be approached with caution. Although Buddhist societies have some cultural caution about disturbing the land, such that intervention might require the sanction of a ritual specialist, Clarke argues that it is incorrect to assume that just because they were Buddhist,

people did not change the landscape. Over a long historical period there was a consistent expansion of indigenous Tibetan agriculture: in the forest areas of the Himalayas, for instance, alpine pastures, farmlands and settlements were created. However, the critical difference between modern and traditional agricultural practice may be found in three points (p. 30): technical focus; industrial power to alter the environment extensively and rapidly; and economic pressures for growth.

This is proved by Winkler's observations on 'Deforestation in Eastern Tibet: Human Impact Past and Present'. His paper focuses on two headings: first he examines the historical impact of fire, people, and their grazing animals on forest distribution; second, he discusses the extent of, causes of, and possible solutions to modern deforestation. According to Winkler, the phenomenon of forest-free south-facing slopes in eastern Tibet is not merely a result of climatological factors but very likely also the result of human and animal impact: the intentional burning of forests and the intrusion of grazing animals. But whereas this impact took place over many centuries or even millennia, recent deforestation is only a matter of several years or decades. Since the industrial world made its way onto the Tibetan Plateau via Chinese modernization, the forests have been reduced by nearly a half, mostly through planned commercial timber extraction.

Four articles of the book are concerned with nomadism. In his paper 'The Washu Serthar: A nomadic community of eastern Tibet', Gelek provides an interesting description of traditional social structure, lifestyle and religion. Like other nomadic groups of Tibet, the Washu Serthar have undergone fundamental changes since 1960, including collectivisation, loss of religious freedom, prohibition of the right to trade, and after 1980 decollectivization and commercialization. In her article 'Life and Economic Patterns of Nomads on the Eastern Tibet Plateau', A. Manderscheid examines two different forms of nomadism. These are the completely mobile groups of pure pastoralists ('Brog Pa) and the mobile groups who practise arable agriculture as well as pastoralism (Sa Ma 'Brog). In her conclusion about the chances of survival for nomadism on the Tibetan Plateau she states that "mobile herding in Tibet may well not be completely supplanted, as has been the case in other regions of the world. However, over a longer period of time, development could lead to nomads becoming animal breeders, oriented towards a market production system" (p. 67). N.E. Levine analyses and discusses the same trend in her paper 'From Nomads to Ranchers: Managing pasture among ethnic Tibetans in Sichuan'. This first considers traditional social systems

and pasture management among Golog Tibetans, and then stresses some of the consequences of recent government programmes to develop pastoralism. According to Levine, today's Chinese governmental policy moves toward the intensification of pastoralism do not involve only experiments with forage plants and improved animal breeds but also the continued fencing of pastures and housing of pastoralists. But if the nomads are converted to ranchers and come to be confined to fenced plots, all flexibility is removed from the system of pastoral management with the experienced consequences of pasture degradation. Despite this, markets and transportation facilities are simply too undeveloped to support such an elaborate ranching economy. The Chinese ideology and idea of developing animal husbandry is clearly reflected in Lobsang's short paper 'The Development of Animal Husbandry on the Qinghai-Tibetan Plateau'. In this he proposes five main strategic measures for improvement, including: (1) the development of grassland by improving and enclosing pastures, and planting green fodder; (2) putting outside start-up capital at people's disposal; (3) establishing a new commercial market structure based on the socialist market economy; (4) providing education, research, technical training, and the application of new technologies; (5) establishing a developed co-operative economy according to principles of Marxism and economic reforms.

A second article by Clarke ('Socio-Economic Change and the Environment in a Pastoral Area of Lhasa Municipality') is based on his own field research in the area of Damshung, northeast of Lhasa, and considers changes in traditional Tibetan pastoralism. His comprehensive and very informative account centres in particular on the environmental impact of market forces. He comes to the conclusion that there has been "a change from traditional nomadic to a more modern, semi-settled, form of pastoralism which, combined with increase in stocking levels for market sale and notwithstanding remedial measures, leads to localised land degradation in peri-urban areas and along road corridors" (p. 118).

Two articles in the book deal with agricultural issues in Tibet. H.A. Osmaston's paper on 'Agriculture in the Main Lhasa Valley' presents detailed observations on agriculture and the environment from case studies of individual farmers, semi-nomads, and their communities in central Tibet. The results are interpreted against the background of official policy, administration, and data on the wider agricultural economy. The paper considers the impact of reforms since 1980 on areas of arable production and 'mixed' pastoral/arable production. It concludes that 'mixed' areas have resulted in increased wealth

but at the same time the economic reform policy has led to environmental problems of land degradation, especially on the hills and parts of the uplands, by overgrazing. R.D. Schwartz's paper on 'The Reforms Revisited: Grain procurement in Tibet' outlines how Chinese procurement policy is implemented in Tibet, describes its impact on rural livelihoods, and asks whether state procurement policy has had the effect of retarding or promoting the development of market sales of agricultural products.

In the final article of the book, 'Economic Patterns of the Tibet Autonomous Region' Rong Ma provides an account of modern economic history that focuses on subsidy and nationality relations. He examines records and statistics on the twentieth century economy and places them in the context of relations between the Tibet Autonomous Region and the lowland Han regions of China.

This book is a unique new work. On the one hand it is a useful contribution to the present interdisciplinary scientific debate on development and social and environmental change. On the other, it is essential reading for those concerned with an objective assessment of Tibet's present and future development. Despite the very profound information given by the various authors, the book is also very thoroughly prepared, including an introduction to the contributors and their scientific and institutional backgrounds, lists of plates, maps and tables, notes on transcription as well as a comprehensive glossary at the end. Unfortunately the editor passed away on February 3<sup>rd</sup> 1998 and was not able to witness the success of his work. Despite this tragic circumstance the book has been completed with the help of Mrs Jinchai Clarke.

*Contested Hierarchies: A Collaborative Ethnography of Caste among the Newars of the Kathmandu Valley, Nepal* edited by David N. Gellner and Declan Quigley. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1995. 364 pp., 19 plates, 12 figures, 30 tables, appendix, index.

Reviewed by Martin Gaenszle

The concept of caste has long dominated discussions of South Asian anthropology, but more recently its heuristic value has been increasingly questioned.