

History as Mindscapes: A memory of the peasants' movement of Nepal

by Yogesh Raj

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The lifestyle and economic conditions of the Newar peasants of the Kathmandu valley have drastically changed over the last sixty years. Today, only very elderly persons can remember the old days of the mid-twentieth century and therefore measure the transformations over the last decades. To understand what the life of the Jyapus (Newar agriculturists) was like just before and immediately after the fall of the Ranas (February 1951), it is important to revisit this recent past through topical sources. This is precisely what Yogesh Raj has undertaken in this book published by Martin Chautari. The author is assistant professor at the Nepal Engineering College (located in Bhaktapur) and is presently based at Imperial College, London, engaged in research on the history of production and distribution of everyday commodities in the early nineteenth century. His work, *History as Mindscapes*, presents the autobiography and the memories of a peasant leader, Krishnabhakta Caguthi (born in 1928), a Newar native from Bhaktapur and member of the Jyapu community. Caguthi was once a powerful district-level political figure. While marginalized over the years, he remained active in the 1980-1990s in mobilizing the townspeople for public renovation work and is still a well-known personality in Bhaktapur.

The narratives contained in *History as Mindscapes* were recorded in Newari and translated first into Nepali, then into English. The author-cum-editor has also used occasional passages written by Caguthi himself in Nepali with the help of friends (Caguthi is nearly illiterate). These passages were merged with the type-recorded version to establish what Yogesh Raj calls the "Nepali Master Copy". It is the translation into English of this Master Copy that is reviewed here. The whole work is of an excellent academic standard and the author is to be wholeheartedly congratulated.

The memories recorded in *History as Mindscapes* span roughly 35 years and begin in the early 1940s. The monograph thus covers the last years of

the Ranas, the first democratic decade of the post-Rana period (1951-1960) and the beginning of the Panchayat era, under the rule of King Mahendra. It gives a rich account of social and agrarian relations of the period, with a number of accurate details, as well as valuable observations concerning the local peasant movements in mid-twentieth century Nepal. The data on material culture, agrarian relations and daily life are of exceptional interest. They are as good as, and perhaps even better than, the narrator's memories of peasant movements in Nepal. Personally, I consider this first series of documents the most remarkable and comprehensive part of the book. I regret not having read this autobiography at the time I was working on the Newar peasant community of Pyangaon (Lalitpur) and on the 32 Jyapu neighbourhoods, *tols*, of Kathmandu. It would have been of considerable help in putting my data in a comparative context. The narrative section is divided into 27 short chapters, with no title. Below, I group together some observations on a limited number of subjects, providing extracts to highlight the quality and the diversity of the facts related.

The dreadful earthquake that struck Nepal on 15 January 1934 (1990 V.S.) is narrated in the first chapter. Caguthi was 5 years old: "The city streets had turned into rubble mounds. The earth shook every now and then. Even those whose houses stood upright chose to spend the night along the riverbank...The back walls of the houses belonging to Asmadu Makaju and Bikulal Bhaila had fallen to the ground. Our own house was half flattened, with all the people in terrace plunging down along with the bricks...These were the days of the Ranas. Thus, the rescue operation was immediate and effective [what will happen if such an earthquake takes place now?]....The quake kept recurring with gradually decreasing effects for ten days afterwards."

Other events in recent Nepalese history are merely mentioned in passing: the return of King Tribhuvan from Delhi at Gaucar Airport, "waving his right hand", on February 15, 1951 (2007 V.S.) (p. 38); the Coronation of King Mahendra in 1956 (2013 V.S.), and so on. The introduction of *candrabatti* ("the light of Candra", or the moonlight, the Nepali term for electricity) lighting the nights of the Valley is described in detail. "It occurs after Candra Shamsar ascended to power...The power station was in Pharping" (Chapter 3). However *bijuli* (electricity), Caguthi adds, reached Bhaktapur only at the time of Juddha Shamsar. The first aeroplane (*havajaj* in Nepali), seen in the skies of the Kathmandu Valley in 1949 (2006 V.S.), is vividly

recalled: “The figure looked like a fish carrying a cross-bar. We, the children of the locality, ran and jumped from terrace to terrace to follow it” (Chapter 3). The heavy snowfall in 1944 (in the month of *pus* 2001 V.S.), so unusual in the Valley, is also remembered.

As scholars interested in the farming techniques that once prevailed in this region will know, the extraction of *kâmcâ* (Nepali *kalimati*), clay soil fertilizer, below the sand and dark soil layers of the earth, was an outstanding feature of, and a necessary component in, the ancient form of agriculture of the Kathmandu Valley. It was a vital, but also much feared, activity, because of the numerous fatal accidents occurring when digging these tunnels and pits, sometimes a hundred feet (30 metres) below the earth: “Peasants were killed every year in those pits. Even in Kathmandu and Patan” (p. 142). Chapter 19 contains unique information about mines of this high-quality *kamca* clay soil: “These pits could not be vertical as it would have not been possible to remove the dug out materials. So generally, these pits appeared as tunnels which slopes downwards as one entered deeper...[when the soil clay is of good quality] fifty backloads of that *kamca* is sufficient to fertilize a *ropani* of land (...), for the same piece of land a hundred and fifty backloads is sometimes necessary, when the *kamca* is of poor quality...One has to work for three months ahead of the plantation season to dig up the required amount of clay”. One of the reasons why peasants were drawn to the use of chemical fertilizers was the danger to their lives when mining in the pits. The narrator dates the mass introduction of foreign fertilizers to 1964 (2021 V.S.)

Buffaloes were an important element of economic life, as attested to by many references to these animals. As far as food is concerned, rice was rare in Caguthi’s Jyapu family. “To put it simply, a mouthful of rice was a distant dream for us...Instead rice, our daily food consisted of a pot full of boiling water with two handful of wheat flour, a pinch of salt and turmeric. If somebody asked us if we had rice, we would nod and would reply that we had” (Chapter 2). At lunch time: “Green leaves of *sakeca* [colocasia], carrot, and pea were our staple diet. And of course, a full pot of water. We could not ever see *roti*, forget eating it” (p. 111).¹ However, meat, rice beer and alcohol were fully available in local shops. The lamas were regularly called upon to eliminate the risk of hailstorms, especially the ones provoked by the

1 Beaten rice was also used for tiffin.

“threatening clouds *pomsu* which keep on making *garagara garagara* noise” (p. 182). This procedure (by chanting mantras) was called *phalca svayegu* in Newari. Caguthi also vividly lists the variety of dresses worn in those early days and how they were weaved locally (Chapter 6). “Tattooing [he says further on] was very common. Women would consider it their birth right. They believed that they could feed themselves by selling these ornaments during the long journey after their deaths. They tattooed themselves. First, they would draw the design and then prick along the lines with coloured needle tips on their hands or on their calves. The most popular designs were of a peacock and clove” (p. 54).

Money was rather scarce. “The wage he [Caguthi’s father] earned by carrying shoulder loads for a shopkeeper was the only source of money for us (...). I learned that he used to get 20 *paisa* for the full cargo load” (Chapter 4). “Money was still considered the latest innovation in those days. We would barter meat with rice grains. We used to pay the land revenue office with paddy as well. Money rose to its prominence only after Tribhuvan declared monetary salaries to the government instead of the produce of land [1952]. That year, we had to pay thirty-seven and a half *pathi* as an annual tax for a *ropani*. When we were asked to pay money instead of paddy, we paid at the rate of one rupee for five *pathis*” (Chapter 6). “In those days [1945-48], the wage for agricultural labour was only eight *annas*. I can still recall the days when the daily wage was only four *annas*. If I tell this to anyone, they will look at me as if I have turned into a relic” (p. 64). However, Caguthi mentions on page 55 that as of 1951, “the daily wage for mining the clay soil has already become five *annas*”. In Chapter 6, he asserts that within the Jyapu community, “We did not use to pay wages for labour. We did not receive that either. We used to pay labour by labour, especially among ourselves, in activities such as mining the clay soil, tilling the land, or carpentry and bricklaying works...People used to repay the debt to each of them by contributing my labour for the same number of days” [*bvala khayegu/pulegu*]...Money was very expensive compared to labour” (*idem*) (p. 52).

“No one had a clock” (p. 59). Time was mainly estimated by natural events, light intensity and animal life, such as the crowing of the rooster in the early morning. The solar days were divided into eight *pahar*² (Newari: *phah*), an important notion for these agriculturists. Some elementary

2 R. L. Turner’s dictionary translates *pahar* as “watch, space of three hours” (p. 371).

astronomical observations were also used to identify seasons and critical moments in the agricultural calendar. “The parents would see the *suli-nau* [translated here as Venus] and estimate the season for wheat harvesting. Back then, people used to say that *suli-nau* stars were the real power sources of peasants. We could go to a farm and cut the wheat stalks till the *suli-nau* shined in the sky. The day *suli-nau* stopped appearing we would feel very weak and an insatiable thirst would start to engulf us. Similarly, the wheat would also get burnt within a couple of days...If we plant paddy samplings after *suli-nau* stars appear, the yield will be drastically lesser. Our parents used to wake us up when the *suli-nau* was at its zenith. If I got up by the time *khu-nau* [translated by Ursa Minor] was just setting behind the mountains, Mother would call me lazy” (p. 59). All these details are particularly fascinating.

Krishnabhakta Caguthi’s family was very poor and mainly tilled land owned by landlords. In some cases, the harvest had to be carried to the owner’s house from Bhaktapur all the way to Kathmandu. The food was just enough to live on. Caguthi also mentions some land they bought and they cultivated by working directly on it (Chapter 2), as well as land that they were cultivating as secondary tillers (Chapter 2). A conflict over land tilled for a Buddhist *baha* is mentioned on pp. 82-83. As a rule, the general conditions of Bhaktapurian peasantry were dramatic and horrifying. Interestingly enough, Caguthi reports a widely shared theory among local peasantry according to which the native indigenous people of the Kathmandu Valley formerly owned all the land. It was they who cleared the forests and made the land arable, not the landowners. Only then did they sell the fields to newcomers in exchange for gold coins. Afterwards they started to till these lands for the immigrants. Gathamugah, presented here as a sort of Jyapu indigenous hero, complained but to no avail (p. 187). The festival named in honour of this person and still performed during the rainy season is seen, from this point of view, as a manifestation of the old Jyapu culture fighting against the land-greedy newcomers. According to one version, the newcomers represented an indigenous Jyapu, whose name was Gathamugah and who protested against the selling of land, with a demon effigy. These people, called *birtavals*, created the Gathamugah festival during which this effigy “is taken away from the city and burnt to death” (pp. 87-88). For Jyapus, the claim to landownership is thus “a natural right” (p. 187).

Relations between the tiller and the landowner were extremely hierarchical and duplicated the pure/impure hierarchy of the caste order of society. Jyapu tillers were compelled “to smear the house of their landowners, to massage the female members of their family with oil, to chaperone their married-off daughters on their return to their in-laws, to wash their clothes, even the undergarments of the ladies, they had to distil wine or beer, slaughter, then clean, cut and roast the male buffaloes and prepare vegetables for their feasts” (Chapter 2). Upon the death of their family members they also had to ferry all the edibles and utensils of their landowners to temples and summon all the relatives (*idem*, p. 34). “When a family member died in the land-owner’s household, the tillers had to protect the corpse until it was taken away to the cremation ground, manage everything for the ten post-mortuary rites, accompany the pyre-lighting member in his daily rounds to the rivers, prepare the tobacco hookah for their relatives during their visits to console the bereaved family on the fourth day, and also to hop and bring seven logs of wood for the seventh Day ritual” (*idem*, p. 34). All these obligations were felt to be an unbearable burden and a form of extortion, of forced labour. In communist booklets, these landlords were called “feudal leeches” (p. 140). Peasants were practically servants bound to their owners’ families. The narrator does not deny the existence of a caste system (for the most part he stresses its overall decline in contemporary times), but he simply subsumes it under class hierarchy and implicitly dismisses it as an epiphenomenon or as a relic of feudalism.

The beginnings of the “All Nepal Peasant Organization”, *Akhil Nepal Kisan Samgh* (ANKS), shortly after the fall of the Ranas, are recounted. Caguthi was 16 years old at that time. The ANKS aimed at defending peasants and at protesting against unjustified taxes (hay taxes for instance, p. 71) and old *rakami* obligations laid down by the Ranas. The *Kisan Samgh* claimed lands for the landless, campaigned for the annual tenancy rent receipt delivered by landowners, etc. It strove to display its banner as well as to protect fields against thieves and wandering cattle at night. “We had to spend nights in the open, battling against mosquitoes and sleep just in case a cow might appear from somewhere to destroy the paddy plants” (p. 153). Their members helped peasants obtain compensation from cow-owners when their cattle were seized while plundering the crops in the fields. It seems that the *Samgh* also acted like an arbitrator and judge for social (familial

and personal) disputes (p. 83). The Land Reform was a crucial moment and a large success for the *Kisan Sangh* peasant organization. Launched by the Nepali Congress during the first years of the post-Rana period, it introduced considerable improvements and a form of security for the peasantry. The rent to be paid on tilled lands was fixed at 23 *pathi*, only payable on the main crop (p. 127). This considerably reduced the amount of grain to be paid to landlords. Landowners became very irate because of these reforms: “the situation has come to blows” (p. 127).

The whole book is a virulent attack on, and critical account of, the methods used by the local communist party: the Nepal Workers and Peasants Party (NWPP), a radical hard-line organization founded in 1975 by Narayan Man Bijukchhe (alias Comrade Rohit), who was born in 1940 and was one of Caguthi’s comrades-in-arms. Ideologically, this party has doctrinal links with the Maoists though it enjoys stronger relations with communist North Korea. In 2006, it was a member of the Seven Party Alliance which overthrew King Gyanendra. In Caguthi’s narratives the NWPP is compared to a gang, using peasants for Bijukchhe’s personal ends, maintaining close relations with “goondas” (ruffians), trying to keep control of all local affairs and using the worst methods to eliminate his opponents. In 1969 (Shravan 2025 V.S.), a dramatic event illustrating the internal conflicts of the peasant political movement took place in the life of Krishnabhakta Caguthi. It is related in his own words (Chapter 21). He and some of his friends were charged with corruption and self-interest in the management of a Cooperative which distributed chemical fertilizers to the local Bhaktapur peasant community. A large crowd of peasants assembled one day in front of the central Cooperative office and complained that this office did not supply fertilizers on time. They demanded the immediate reimbursement of their deposits and to see the Cooperative’s latest accounts. The mob then started to punch Caguthi in the face, to physically assault and beat him and his friends. Caguthi was ridiculed, a cap placed backwards on his head. He was dragged along and paraded naked and bleeding throughout the city. The narrator contends that the peasants were manipulated by a handful of activists closely linked to Naramamca (Narayan Man Bijukchhe’s nickname, alias Comrade Rohit) and the author’s rivals. He totally rejects the accusation of corruption and accuses Naramamca’s communist friends of taking revenge through this mischievous deed. According to him, it was a conspiracy to politically assassinate him. Yogesh Raj provides two

appendices directly related to this affair. The first one (Appendix A, pp. 148-150) supports Caguthi's version and defends his honesty. The second (Appendix C, pp. 168-169) is in favour of Rohit and maintains the accusation of corruption. Whatever the truth may be, this event marks the decline of Caguthi's dominant role as a local political leader and the rise of the future NWPP in Bhaktapur.

The life of the Jyapu peasants portrayed in these narratives is characterised by extreme poverty and harsh conditions. They were pitiful, with recurrent shortages of money, food, and even seed during periods of sowing and planting. "By the onset of the paddy planting season many peasantry households would reach the brink of famine. They were even forced to borrow seeds. And even grains to feed themselves" (p. 135). People used to wake up early in the morning, sometime before dawn, to carry out the various activities required of them. The work undertaken all day long was hard and used up a considerable amount of energy. Caguthi's father "could never see the face of happiness" (p. 43), Caguthi's mother "was not fond of any particular food item...Likes and dislikes are only for those who can afford to choose" (p. 47). "We, the children would remember *dasaim* and *biska* [festivals] as the two occasions for receiving new clothes. Our desires could not be realized every year though" (p. 53). Peasants used to wear torn clothes nearly all year long. Houses were always in a state of filth: "Our houses smelled foul. We collected our shit and filth underneath the staircase. We slept on floors or a layer of hay mattress" (p. 197). My own observations in Pyangaon village (1970-1972) closely correspond to this description, except that people ate better food.

By and large, in the mid-twentieth century during the Rana period, Bhaktapurian peasants appeared to be totally wretched, destitute and almost pathetic. Nobody among the *Kisan Sangh* could recite the alphabet or knew how to read (p. 138). Such grim realities are reminiscent of the miserable life of the Russian *moujik* peasantry described by Russian novelists and authors at the end of the nineteenth and beginning of the twentieth century, before the Communist Revolutions of 1905 and 1917. People in their everyday lives seemed totally absorbed in agricultural work, tilling land, carrying loads, carpentry and household chores. Curiously enough, Caguthi does not say anything about musical performances, theatre, *pyakhan*, or festivals which are so important in the Newar and Jyapu vernacular culture. He narrates only the dark and harsh side of life; nothing is said of joyful,

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happy moments. Such deliberate ‘miserabilism’ strikes the reader. It looks like a bias, a tendentious reconstruction of the past, an exaggerated pitiful view of life to suit the narrator’s communist ideology. Whatever the case may be, I must say that the painful and extremely difficult situation the Jyapus of Bhaktapur lived in, as portrayed here, closely parallels what I recorded during my research in the 1990s on the recent past of the Jyapus in Kathmandu city. By contrast, the state of village-dwelling Jyapu communities, where peasants were less dominated by upper castes and owned more private fields, seems better than the situation described here, with of course some exceptions.

Alongside Krishnabhakta Caguthi’s own account, the book is made up of additional documents: parallel autobiographical texts published in Nepali, various published or unpublished narratives, contemporary public records, *Akhil Nepal Kisan Samgh* documents and official government records. These documents are printed on the right margin of the page, in a smaller font, in juxtaposition to the main text. They supplement the data discussed by Caguthi and interpose his narratives in a useful way. More importantly, they more or less eliminate the risk of overstatement and exaggeration on the part of the author, and contribute to establishing the worthiness of his personal account. The book also includes a number of facsimiles of primary documents as well as a Newari-Nepali-English glossary. The overall result is a window opening on what Yogesh Raj calls a “mindscape”, a mental horizon where social facts are contextualised. The social past is reconstituted, “both revived and relieved” (p. ix-xi).

This autobiography, the parallel narratives and the supplementary documents regrouped in this book are of first-rate interest and constitute a valuable, detailed corpus. Admittedly, some difficulties affect the presentation. For instance, shifting from the Vikram Sambat [V.S.] era used in the main text to the Western Gregorian calendar, mostly referred to in texts in the margins, is rather clumsy. The Land Reform, the complexities of the rent system and the *guthi* type of tenure³ would also have been more readable had an account of this reform been given in the Introduction. As it is formulated in the book, the passage about rents on *guthi* land is barely understandable by non-specialists of these topics. Yet, these are minor

3 For instance, the *chvayam bali* commission system, mentioned on p. 179 in connection with *guthi* land, is obscure. It seems that even King Birendra, to whom Caguthi tried to explain it, also had some difficulty in understanding it.

flaws. The editing work has been done in a very meticulous way, though the translation of the narrative is in poor English and indeed contains numerous errors. The emphasis here is on empirical research in its noblest form. It is replete with useful economic data from material life—data often denigrated by more theoretically oriented scholars.

From a more general viewpoint, *History as Mindscapes* shifts the focus from collective identities, so prominent in the Nepalese social science landscape over the last two decades, to singular figures and to the self. Individual narratives and life stories are presented here as a valuable line of research, just as important as more homogenising discourses on ethnic groups, to study the impact of global forces on the individual and vice versa. This is a new trend, even if some foreign scholars (and admittedly some Nepalese as well) have already concentrated their analysis on life stories of Nepalese personalities. What is more, the book can be considered as one of the first accounts of ‘Subaltern Studies’ in Nepal, bringing the peripheral to the centre. The book will thus attract a wide audience among scholars engaged in Nepalese studies, especially historians, political scientists, social anthropologists and sociologists. Unfortunately, since it is not a literary work (it has not been conceptualised in this manner), there is little chance that it will go beyond this restricted audience.

Krishnabhakta Caguthi is considered by his opponents to be a political opportunist, shifting allegiances between various political parties throughout his life. However, in his narrative, the peasant leader presents himself as extremely defiant towards politics and politicians. He was once a member of the Communist Party founded in 1949, but he rapidly took his distance from all political organizations, whether *Kamgresis*, communists or *panchayatis*. To be more precise, Caguthi states that before 1953 (2010 V.S.) “political activists and workers were generally honest” (p. 197), but that things worsened after this initial period. His tone of voice becomes particularly bitter when he speaks about this subject: “Politics has become a vocation for witches who keep on perpetually fooling the people” (p. 199). Even if he shares most of his class-based political ideas and his view of history with the communists, the latter are particularly criticised for their lies and ability to abuse the naivety and the innocence of the people. “They are a thankless lot. They are devoid of history. They do not seem to remember the past...Their worst character trait is that they consider themselves eternally pure and everyone else as revisionists and betrayers”

(p. 109). Despite this, Caguthi rightly recognises (at least as far as Bhaktapur is concerned) that Congress activists “belonged to the landowners and the lenders” (p. 197). When *Kamgresis* favoured peasantry, they had “romantic and unrealistic ideas” about us (p. 197). As in Kathmandu’s old city, the peasants of Bhaktapur were (and still are) communist orientated and they backed the Communist Party which at that time was mostly an underground organization. Moreover, our peasant activist does not hesitate to talk about Nepal’s two neighbours: “Hindusthan is not our friend. But China is. China wanted the Nepalis to work for themselves and be self-reliant” (p. 194). In the early 1950s, he says, India had wanted to *Sikkimize* Nepal (p. 106).

Caguthi’s bitterness encompasses the present situation of the Jyapus: “Sadly, today, when our children hear someone calling them Jyapu, they frown and feel ashamed. When we speak of our spent lives, they run away and avoid us. They are not proud of being the sons and daughters of peasants like us. Instead they dress up like the petty bourgeois and enjoy the bourgeois implements while forgetting all the tools we have been using to till the land” (p. 199). Nowadays, “agricultural lands have disappeared and turned into suburbs” (p. 167). As a matter of fact, contemporary city-dwelling peasants have sold most of their land (which has been used to build houses), fewer and fewer cultivate fields, they become richer, educated and have turned to more respectable activities in the tertiary (service) sector of the economy. Today, they dismiss the days of their fathers and forefathers and have turned towards the modern world.

One more thing has to be stressed. Caguthi’s memories only deal with peasants in the Kathmandu Valley. At that time, the Bhaktapur branch of Kisan Sangh conducted a number of joint actions with the Jyapus of Kathmandu and Lalitpur, yet the peasantry outside the Valley is totally ignored. There is therefore a meaningful ethnic component in these recordings, and even a single caste-delimited scope (Jyapu),⁴ or, to use the author’s term, “mindscape”. Even within the Jyapu community of the Valley, some friction exists between the peasants from one town and another, despite joint rallies and a unified front to make demands of the government. Caguthi relates, for instance, how his Bhaktapur’s friends were not at ease when taking a meal with Jyapus from Kathmandu and Patan. They criticized the peasants from these two towns for not respecting purity

4 Though other peasant groups in the Valley, such as the Duims, are sometime referred to.

and impurity rules during meals taken together (p. 83). Some Bhaktapurian Jyapus even envisaged taking a purifying dip at Pashupati or performing *gaudan* (gift of a cow to a Brahman priest) after these joint meals. In relation to this, we must recall that the Jyapus from Bhaktapur mostly call upon Brahman priests for their rituals, whereas in Patan and Kathmandu, they summon Vajracharya Buddhists priests. Thus, the united front displayed in political actions conceals profound differences in the social and religious sphere, as well as in status. Similarly, the parochial dimension of the NWPP communist party and its exclusive link to the Bhaktapur area in opposition to the communist universalistic view of social class comes to mind. Unfortunately, the present autobiography does not provide any clues to explain such a singular situation.

Reading this book is so refreshing that I would suggest, by way of a conclusion, that a Nepalese publisher launch a series focusing on such subaltern narratives written by Nepalese people. We need to hear such personal, lively voices from the periphery of society, narratives from below, exemplifying the geographical, linguistic and ethnic diversity of the country, without the bias of political parties. Such books, based on both unique and sufficiently general data, would give substance to more macro-historical investigations. They would considerably help our understanding of the country's recent history and of the socio-economic transformations endured by its people in the twentieth century. They would also contribute by placing major political events that Nepal has faced over the last decade into perspective. As so rightly put by Yogesh Raj, this genre "gives to history and memory an equal weight; both the biases of class and superstructure orientations are balanced" (p. xi). Moreover, such a series of subaltern narratives would obviously temper the Western view of Nepal, expressed mostly by social anthropologists, Indologists or linguists, which stresses for instance the religious and caste system, and would contribute by providing another image of the country's society and culture. For all these reasons, this book is a landmark in establishing a scientific historiography of Nepal.