

Christoph von Fürer-Haimendorf (Ed.), **Contributions to the Anthropology of Nepal**, Aris and Phillips Ltd. Warminster, 1974. (Reviewed in **Man, Journal of the RAI**)

Like population, anthropology in Nepal is growing exponentially. This multi-ethnic collection describes 'work in progress' and is consequently very uneven in approach and quality. Shamanism is the dominant theme. Allen describes the 'ritual journey' among the Rai of east Nepal in a perceptive piece of ethnography. Hitchcock analyses a shaman's song from the Magars of central Nepal and sees in it ambiguities found in generalized marriage exchange, reference to sexual ambiguity and evidence of the shaman's ambiguous status. Gaborieau analyses songs in western Nepal and concludes that they reflect a real tension between an older style of arranged marriage and more recent 'love' relationships. Hofer writes generally on spirit possession, asking why such possession is a specialist activity in the Himalayas while it is open to the laity in India. He then describes shamanism among the Tamangs, applying linguistic models to the shamanistic texts. Michl describes shamanism among the Chantel (copper miners). Sharma contributes to the ethnography on the Divinities of the Karnali Basin in Western Nepal. Greenwold investigates the problem of whether 'monkhood' is an inherent characteristic of Buddhism and by what standards Newar 'Buddhists' are to be judged. The ethnographic description of a Thakali clan ritual by Jest complements the film shown at the Symposium.

Two papers are concerned with kinship and caste. Aziz argues that the stereotype of agnatic descent in Tibet is mistaken; Tibetan society was effectively bilateral, based on households and kindreds. Caplan tests hypothesis of Leach and Dumont concerning the significance and prevalence of caste endogamy by looking at inter-caste marriages in a west Nepalese town. It is the only paper to study the modern sector in Nepal and to use simple statistics. Two other papers discuss economic change. The editor discusses the effects of changing patterns of trade and increased monetization, particularly the closing of the Tibetan salt trade, on the high-altitude Bhotia people. Messerschmidt and Gurung compare the innovatory techniques of Gurung and Thakali 'big men' and attempt a historical reconstruction of one legendary figure. The other three contributions consist of rather broad ethnographic accounts. Fournier outlines an attempt to count the distribution of ethnic groups, particularly the Tamangs. Oppitz summarizes his work, published in German in 1968, on the clan history of the Sherpas and reconsiders problems concerning the boundaries between myth and history.

For those interested in shamanism and in the Tibeto-Burman field area this is a useful work. It omits many important areas, for example politics and power, agricultural economics and the major effects of economic development, formal demography and medicine, social control and administration. Yet it provides a good cross-section of some of the major field-work recently completed in the area. It is doubtful whether, in the present form, much of the material is of more than local interest. But there are clearly going to be some important contributions in the future based on the work reported in a preliminary way here. The editor is to be congratulated for having achieved the difficult task of international co-operation which led to the conference and to this volume.