

HEIKO SCHRADER, *Trading Patterns in the Nepal Himalayas*. (Bielefelder Studien zur Entwicklungssoziologie, 39). Saarbrücken/Fort Lauderdale: breitenbach Publishers, 1988. 383 pages

Heiko Schrader's dissertation *Trading Patterns in the Nepal Himalayas* is a valuable contribution to Nepalese studies. Ingeniously the author combines various academic disciplines, thereby providing a comprehensive picture of trans-Himalayan trade in historical perspective. As Hans-Dieter Evers puts it in the introduction, the author's intentions go beyond a simple account of trading routes and trading patterns. He uses the existing material in order "to put his own theorizing to the test". Those acquainted with scientific literature on Nepal know that publications combining social anthropology (surpassing mere ethnographic accounts), sociology, history and economy, integrating macro-analyses with micro-perspectives are rare. Heiko Schrader's contribution is especially valuable because it is a very interesting inquiry in an "underdeveloped field".

The book starts with a theoretical outline of the long-distance trade, introducing the basic concepts of the study and examining the factors that determine the trading patterns. Five topics regarded as crucial are singled out: trade access, trade success and economic stratification, trade and the state, trade and national integration, and trade and the international market system. A second introductory chapter describes Nepalese economic history, mainly the state élites' impact upon trading activities and resource mobilization as well as the impact of international relations (Nepal-India and Nepal-Tibet) on the trading patterns.

A shift in viewpoint in the following chapter introduces the "micro-perspective" by presenting and discussing material on five Nepalese trading communities (in Byans, Thakkhola, Manangba, Khumbu and Walongchung Gola). Rich ethno-historical data is used for the examination of ecological, economic, political, social and ideological factors determining trading patterns and economic development. Thus H. Schrader not only discusses the habitat, the flow of products, the production factors, trade volume etc., but also emphasises the actors involved in the organisation of trade, particularly the local élites. The consideration of their role in trading activities allows the author to link the processes of change within the communities described with those on the macro-level, the state. Here, the author tends to play down the extent of the competition or even struggles between the central bureaucracy and the élites within the trading communities, stressing as he does the positive side of such "institutionalized hierarchical patron-client relationships", i.e. the

support of the political system by local élites in order to acquire and maintain privileges.

The comparison of economic processes within the five communities studied enables the author to draw conclusions in the final part of the book. Heiko Schrader sees the motivation for starting indigenous trade in the inability to subsist in the home region, due to the low productivity of the soil because of high attitudes rather than to scarce arable and pastoral land. Even though the author is probably right, one could raise the question as to what was first: trading or agriculture? – Since the author convincingly argues that the access of commoners to trade has been limited by local élites, the question arises whether their taking to agriculture in low-productivity areas too, was a consequence of internal group relations of political and economic dominance.

The state's role in trading activities appears to be crucial. Heiko Schrader stresses the fact that during the 19th century, Nepal successfully defended her monopolistic position as an intermediary in trans-Himalayan trade. While he argues that rulers should have a direct interest in, or be agents of various types of foreign trade, ranging from direct organisation and management of trade to mercantilist economic policies, he comes to the conclusion that national economic integration in Nepal has been impeded by the attitude of the Rana-rulers who were more interested in increasing their personal wealth than, for instance, in promoting the transportation system.

Having introduced a variety of crucial and very interesting topics the author nevertheless leaves many questions open. Especially his discussion of the very difficult topic of "national economic integration" would have benefited from a more detailed analysis of the connection between long-distance trade and other sectors of the economy. Perhaps Heiko Schrader will develop his theory on the trading patterns in the Nepal Himalayas in future publications.

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KAMAL SIDDIQUI, SAYEDA ROWSHAN QADIR, SITARA ALAMGIR, SAYEEDUL HUQ: *Social Formation in Dhaka City. A Study in Third World Urban Sociology*. Dhaka: The University Press Limited. 1990. vi, 456 pp. 450 Taka

Dhaka, or Dacca as it used to be spelled, the capital of Bangladesh, has become one of the fastest growing cities of the world. After 400 years of a