

the status of affines among high caste Hindus, Gerard Toffin describes cooperative forms of agriculture among the West-Tamangs vis à vis the increasing monetization of the hill economy and new cultivation methods. Anne de Sales reports on the gradual disappearance of the Kham-Magar dancers who move from village to village in order to ward off evil spirits and to obtain fertility for man and earth. These articles are little gems. Their direct utility may not be convincing to the pragmatist, but, as so often, one day they may render valuable services, as for example the knowledge about local cooperative forms (see Toffin's article) in view of the present trend of development cooperation to support self-help groups. The other articles deal with interrelations between ecology and economics in the Manang area (Perdita Pohle), with the appreciation of environment and economic behaviour of small societies exemplified by the Lohorong Rai (Klaus Seeland), with trends in the Kathmandu valley and in Gorkha since the land reform 1959-72 (Ulrike Müller) and with changes in the law of succession since 1853 (Jean Fezas) – here the author also includes a series of relevant translated texts.

Ruedi Baumgartner describes the influence of tourism and reactions of the Rolwaling-Sherpa and Marc Barani writes about Newari dwelling patterns in Kirtipur.

A short biography of the authors would have been appreciated and also an introduction to recent research results on population growth, decline of land fertility, soil erosion, deforestation, health, development cooperation, political articulation, decentralization of planning and implementation of development projects. On all these subjects research has been done and published during recent years. Klaus Seeland would doubtless have gladly complied with this desire, but, as he explains in the introduction, he could not invite representatives from those fields to the conference due to shortage of funds. This is regrettable since it was on the initiative of the University of Konstanz that this conference was convened and the Federal Republic of Germany plays no small role in Nepal as regards development cooperation, research work and tourism. But that can be made good, as the intention and quality of the book show. All interested in Nepal will be glad if the work here started is continued.

Hermann Warth

Gerard Toffin: *Société et Religion chez les Néwar du Népal.* (Cahiers Népalais). Paris: Editions du Centre de la Recherche Scientifique, 1984. 668 pages, 173 illustrations, FF 520.-

With this magnum opus G. Toffin has presented a unique scholarly work on the Newar of Nepal, an ethnic group of Tibeto-Burmese origin predominantly inhabit-

ing the Kathmandu Valley and Central Nepal. Based on his experiences gathered mostly in the 1970s in Panauti and Pyangaon, he gives in this volume a synopsis of his profound knowledge of Newar culture and society. Still very much alive, Newar customs and religious life have attracted dozens of Nepalese and foreign scientists only to unveil some of the many aspects of this great cultural heritage. Where others hesitated, Toffin dared to write a monograph. Among the few ethnologists/social anthropologists who may be called authorities on Newar culture, Toffin has with this book now shown that he belongs to the most eminent.

The volume is divided into four major parts and subdivided into 21 chapters. After a general introduction to the history of the area of present-day Nepal, Toffin gives an account of the history and geography of Newar culture. Part one is about kinship and the structure of the Newar peasant society, giving a lot of yet unpublished information on village life, structures of power, family life, rites and cycles of life etc. In the second part, the reader is acquainted with one of the most interesting aspects of Newar religious life, a socio-religious institution called 'guthi'. In part three Toffin focuses his attention on social phenomena again. The caste system and urban society are analyzed under religious and economic aspects and described as elaborate systems of local power. Social mobility and marriage are also treated in this context. Part four is dedicated to the Newar gods and the performance of religious rites, the sacredness of inhabited space, the festival calendar and pilgrimages. The religion of the Tantrists (Hindu devotees following magical-mystic ways to salvation) and the religiousness of the individual are two chapters which provide the reader with information about the 'hidden' aspects of religion, while the preceding chapters stress those of its public appearance. The volume is in quarto size, which is very favourable to the many black and white and colour photographs, maps and drawings. A very useful addition to the book is the large appendix section. Besides the bibliography there are a transliteration table of the place names in Newari and Nepali, an index of the names of the various ethnic groups, castes and subcastes of Nepal. The index of indigenous technical terms covering some of the current languages of Nepal (including Sanskrit) can also be used as a glossary, because Toffin sometimes adds the French translation, if any, of the respective terms. The book is more a scientific work than a popular account. However, it is not only for the insider's use, but an invaluable source for comparative research on Nepal and on the sociology of religion in general. It is one more example, and I feel free enough to call it an excellent one, of how deep an insight into a sophisticated culture like that of the Newar can be obtained by a Western scholar.

Klaus Seeland