

like "The Huṇiyā went to Hundesh, and Shauk – who was – went to his Shaukān ..." (2.30) or "We must go – said the Huṇiyās, who were – off from Hundesh ..." (2.67). This approach to translation that is sometimes justified as being scholarly betrays a serious misconception about language as being made of isolated words. One may discuss the possibilities of translating oral poetry into written language (and I frankly admit that I don't know how to do it), but Meissner's rendering, even if just meant as a crib to enable the reader to decipher the original, is surely not the right way.

Rainer Kimmig

Gerhard Heller: Krankheitskonzepte und Krankheitssymptome. Eine empirische Untersuchung bei den Tamang von Cautara/Nepal zur Frage der kulturspezifischen Prägung von Krankheitserleben. (Medizin in Entwicklungsländern, 18). Frankfurt/M., Bern, New York: Peter Lang Verlag, 1985. XIV, 255 pages, SFr. 38.–

This study is the result of joint medical and anthropological research which was conducted in a village in Central Nepal in 1974. The author, a physician by training, was invited by Andras Höfer, an anthropologist who had been working in this area for many years. So the basic data of the culture of the Tamang, the largest ethnic minority group in Nepal, were available from the very beginning of the project and the team could concentrate on the ethno-medical issues. The central theme which gradually evolved during the first months of fieldwork led to the following question: do culture-specific illness concepts predetermine the space – and time – orientation of the illness experience of the Tamang?

Right from the beginning of the fieldwork Gerhard Heller noticed that the doctor-patient-relationship was "disturbed" due to the diverging notions about body, health and illness. He illustrates this with two very striking examples, viz. a mother who came with her young daughter to the health post built by the team to ask for medicine against worms. Although the girl was suffering from a severe cough – the author suggests pneumonia or bronchitis – the mother adamantly declined any further help, saying that the girl was only coughing now in front of him. The other case is a father of three children suffering from severe post-measles marasmus. Three times he invited the team to see his children, but the mother declined any help offered by the doctor. These two incidences of "non-compliance" sharpened the curiosity of the research team and the red thread for their future research was discovered.

The data were gathered by the following methods: On a quantitative level: 441 patients were seen, treated and interviewed. Complementary to this on a qualitative

level: two informants, both local healers (bombos or shamans) were selected. They were invited to attend the work in the health post in the mornings and to comment on it in longer interviews in the afternoons. Eventually they took the team to see their own patients in the village, which helped the author to understand the local healer-patient relationship.

While the first two chapters introduce methods and hypotheses, the third chapter takes us to the research area by giving some ethnographical data. This is where we meet some shortcomings of the study: the author keeps referring to the anthropologist's work which is published elsewhere; so the reader feels that some essential information is not included in the study.

Another problem the reader has to face is that there is neither an introduction to the ethnographical vocabulary nor to the medical terminology used in the book. A glossary would have been helpful for readers who are neither doctors nor regional specialists.

After a short introduction to village life and the cycle of the basic subsistence economy the healers and their art are introduced. The author describes the way they communicate with their clientele, the techniques they use and their special abilities. One of the shamans is not only a ritual specialist but also a herbalist who applies the local plants as remedies. Here it would have been interesting to learn more about the way in which he classifies herbal medicines and how they are related to the taxonomy of the symptoms of the Tamang. The health facilities available to a Tamang include a hospital in the next district town and several vaidyas who are more frequented than the hospital where western medicine is offered free. After describing the medical network of the area the author gives a short description of the Tamang physiology, anatomy and etiology of diseases. With these preliminaries the stage is set for the main part (chapters 4 and 5) of the study. The author presents and analyses 40 Tamang diseases, giving ample insight into his interview texts which are the basis of his study. The reader is given a detailed description of the *sarti*-disease in the words of the patients which are commented on by the onlookers and the local healers. On the basis of the interview texts the author describes the cultural construction of illnesses. This being the core of the study it forms a major contribution to the current literature on medical anthropology. The four major diseases of the Tamang around which all ailments and perceptions of bodily malfunctions are centered are *sarti*, *kharo*, *kanu* and *juga* (the cold disease, the hot disease, the moving knot disease and the worm disease). None of these concepts are in any way related to our nosological concepts. Thanks to his extremely substantial material the author is in a position to show that virtually all kinds of illness are perceived by the Tamang along the lines of a *sarti*-complex or a *kharo*-complex etc.

This explains why the mother of the girl with a cough was rigidly rejecting the

idea that her daughter might be coughing, because a cough was not part of the symptom complex she had in mind when she asked for medicine against worms.

And as for the father of the three children ailing and dying from measles, it was the fear of the revenge of the pock goddess which made him reject the intervention of western medicine.

This book is a major contribution to South Asian medical anthropology. It gives us first hand information on the cognitive structures, patients' behaviour and illness concepts among the Tamang.

It is obligatory reading for all physicians working abroad and an interesting introduction to applied cognitive anthropology for all South Asianists.

Beatrix Pfleiderer

Michael Nebelung (red.): *Bangladesh im Schatten der Macht*. Mit Beiträgen von W. Böttcher, I. Hepp, J. Jansen, B. Jessen, T. Lawo, W. Mey, M. Nebelung, M. Rashid, D. Reinhardt, M. Sander, C. Windelen. (Aachener Studien Sozialwissenschaften, 3). Aachen: Rader Verlag, 1986. VI + 385 pp., DM 28.–

Aid and trade links between Bangladesh and the German-speaking world are far from unimportant. For example, West Germany is the third largest donor of bilateral aid and spends well over 100 million DM in the country each year, i. e. about one DM per inhabitant. The humanitarian reasons for this are clear: Bangladesh is one of the most poverty-stricken countries in the world.

It is thus surprising that so little is written about Bangladesh in German. This book, which prides itself on being the first general collection of essays in German, was published fifteen years after Bangladesh attained nationhood.

Bangladesh im Schatten der Macht is intended for a general readership. It focuses on the everyday problems facing people in Bangladesh and on the close links between these and problems and contradictions in Germany and other industrialized societies. It is also intended as a de-mystification of development policies in Bangladesh and as an exhortation not to ignore what is going on in Bangladesh simply because it seems to be of little importance internationally.

The book is not just another pamphlet. On the contrary, it is a well-balanced, excellent introduction to its subject. Some of the information contained in it is new, or has been culled from relatively inaccessible sources, and this makes the book a welcome addition to the literature on contemporary Bangladesh.

In fifteen chapters the book deals with an array of historical, economic and political themes. Special attention is paid to food and health, poverty and rural life, de-