

JANET RIZVI, *Trans-Himalayan Caravans. Merchant Princes and Peasant Traders in Ladakh*. Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1999. 384 pages, 4 maps, 20 b/w photographs, 13 colour photographs, 14 tables, Rs. 695. ISBN 0-19-564855-2

KENNETH M. BAUER, *High Frontiers. Dolpo and the Changing World of Himalayan Pastoralists*. New York: Columbia University Press, 2004. 336 pages, 2 maps, 26 photographs, 2 line drawings, 5 tables, \$ 37.50. ISBN 0-231-12391-4

ECKART EHLERS / HERMANN KREUTZMANN (eds.), *High Mountain Pastoralism in Northern Pakistan*. (Erdkundliches Wissen 132). Stuttgart: Franz Steiner Verlag, 2000. 209 pages, 8 maps, 20 photographs, 28 line drawings, 22 tables, € 44,00. ISBN 3-515-07662-X

Social scientists have for long been interested in mobile, livestock owning and/or herding populations, especially in Africa, the Middle East and to a certain extent Central and Northern Asia. Increasingly, however, studies are also being devoted to the ways of life of mobile peoples in South Asia (for recent overviews see A. Rao / M.J. Casimir (eds.), *Nomadism in South Asia*, Delhi 2003, and V. Saberwal / A. Agrawal, *Whither South Asian Pastoralism?*, special issue of *Nomadic Peoples* 8 (2004), 2). Two principal types of such more or less mobile livestock owning (and usually also herding) cultures can be differentiated. The first comprises (agro-)pastoralist communities who pasture their herds of camels and/or small stock and cattle in the arid western parts of India and Pakistan, notably in the regions of Gujarat, Rajasthan, Sind, Maharashtra and the Deccan in general, and migrate seasonally across the plains, especially in times of drought, in search of better grazing. The second type consists of those who migrate with their flocks of sheep, goats and/or bovines between the lower ranges of the Karakorum and Himalaya, where they tend their fields, and the highest alpine pastures where they tend their animals. The volumes reviewed here are all devoted in one way or another to this second type of mobility and to the peoples who engage in it, or at least did so till fairly recently.

The first two books deal with populations who combined or were integrated into a system of animal husbandry, trade and agriculture. For centuries, trans-Himalayan trade was a major mainstay not only of the local economy, it also played an important role in international markets. Often it involved trading the local surplus in grain for salt, an essential element of diet not locally available, and the economy of several communities throughout the central and western Himalayas (e.g. Hanna Rauber-Schweizer, 'Trade in Far West Nepal: the Economic Adaptation of the Peripatetic Humli-Khyampa', in: A. Rao (ed.), *The Other Nomads. Peripatetic Minorities in Cross-Cultural Perspective*, Köln 1987) was based on combining this trade with the migration of their herds. Sheep, donkeys, horses and yaks moved in seasonal cycles carrying these and other products back and forth.

In her study Janet Rizvi breaks new ground by examining the history of trading nomads and their caravans who travelled for centuries along the international, trans-Himalayan trade routes crossing Ladakh, taking animals on the hoof and carrying wool, rice, barley, maize, buckwheat, hashish, butter, dried cheese, ghee, oil, salt, tea, molasses, medicinal herbs, saffron, spices, dry fruit, ritual paraphernalia, carpets, silver, copper, gold dust, pearls, turquoise, amber, coral, silks and other items of sustenance or luxury for barter or sale. The book consists of eleven chapters (Introduction; The Routes; The Pashm Trade; The Shamma; Zanskar and the Suru Valley; The Entrepreneurs; The Leh-Lhasa Trade; The Trans-Karakorum Trade: A Long History; The Trans-Karakorum Trade Remembered; The Kiraiyakash; The Old Order Changeth...) – earlier versions of some of which have appeared in international journals or edited volumes – followed by five useful appendices and a glossary. In an otherwise well produced book it is a pity that the photographs, especially the black and white ones, are so badly printed.

Rizvi's sources are, of course, archival documents and other unpublished and published literature, but most precious, the memories, testimonies and oral histories that she collected between 1983 and 1994, mostly in Ladakh, Kargil and Kashmir. Meticulously, Rizvi describes the various routes taken, the different communities of traders, the animals used, the organisation of travel, the conditions of grazing, the produce carried back and forth, the weights, measures and rates of exchange, the profits made. Through the prism of exchange and barter, she dissects an intricate web of complementarity and competition that wove together peasants and pastoralists, traders and consumers, monks and laymen, Buddhists and Muslims, villages and cities, grasslands, fields and bazaars, and regions as far apart as Yarkand and Zanskar, Sinkiang and Srinagar, Lhasa and Hoshiarpur.

This is an extraordinarily painstakingly researched and well written study of a way of life that has disappeared and given way to a globalising world of closed borders, refugees, conflicting ideologies and inter-community violence. Janet Rizvi's earlier book on Ladakh (1998) has become standard reading for those interested in the region. This study too is a must for all those interested in learning more about the history of social and economic interaction within and across the Himalayan region and about the integration of animal husbandry in a wider context of multi-resource nomadism and international trade.

Kenneth Bauer's study also deals with a region and people once involved in trade and pastoralism. The region of Dolpo, a culturally Tibetan enclave in north-western Nepal bordering on what is now known officially as the Autonomous Region of Tibet became fairly familiar to scholars of the central Himalayan area through the works of Corneille Jest (*Dolpo: Communautés de langue tibétaine du Népal*, Paris 1975, and *The Tale of the Turquoise: A Himalayan Pilgrimage in Dolp*, Kathmandu 1985). More recently, the region has attracted more widespread attention thanks, first, to two coffee table books and then to the film 'Himalaya'. Written, filmed and produced in 1998 by a predominantly French



team, but co-produced with Nepal National Studio whose executive chairman is related to Nepal's royal family, the film was marketed (in 1999) as a 'Nepali film', and led to a major influx of French tourists to the area (p. 179).

This book is divided into nine chapters: Dolpo's Agro-Pastoral System; Pastoralism, in View and Review; A Sketch of Dolpo's History; A New World Order in Tibet; Nepal's Relations with Its Border Populations and the Case of Dolpo; The Wheel is Broken: A Pastoral Exodus in the Himalayas; Visions of Dolpo: Conservation and Development; A *Tsampa* Western; Perspectives on Change. These chapters trace the transformation of this high montane area and its people, the Dolpo-Pa, from the period prior to the Chinese annexation of Tibet in which a mosaic of animal husbandry, farming and trade across international borders provided the socioeconomic framework, to the early years of the twenty-first century – first to an enclave wherein migration and trade were drastically restricted and then to a landscape with a national park where animal husbandry too was curtailed and tourism began. Kenneth Bauer who lived in Nepal for a few years prior to commencing the research that culminated in this book, has attempted to '...provide a social portrait, but...not an exhaustive ethnography.' (p. 8). He '...understands life in Dolpo as a series of interrelated production systems...' whose transformations he sees as embedded in the wider geo-political context of change (in Tibet/China, Nepal and India), including the current Maoist insurgency and civil war in Nepal. He concludes that 'Dolpo's story over the past fifty years demonstrates that, amid geopolitical transformations, local border communities are not simply passive beneficiaries or victims of world politics. Rather, populations like Dolpo's are active agents in these social, political, and economic processes of change, even on a global scale.' (p. 188)

Unlike the other two volumes reviewed here which implicitly or explicitly treat spatial mobility primarily as an economic strategy, Bauer (while acknowledging this aspect) tries to stress the cognitive and symbolic significance of migration for the people themselves. In doing so, he implicitly enters into a long-standing debate about the primacy of ecology and economy versus identity and ideology in explaining nomadic movement.

Bauer's work is a sensitively written and interesting study. What strikes one however, is that while he takes pains to set out quantitative and qualitative data on rangelands, precipitation and animal census of Dolpo and also goes to fair lengths to spell out its macro-history and Nepal's national park policies, he gives the reader few insights into the presumable variety of Dolpo-Pa perspectives on their changing history, politics, economy and society. It is only in the chapter 'A *Tsampa* Western' that the reader is allowed to hear a few Dolpo-Pa voices. As a result, the dynamism of the people which Bauer seeks to sketch, the agency and resilient voices he wishes to echo, do not come through as clearly as they might have. This apart, *High Frontiers* is a welcome and valuable contribution to the as yet limited body of literature on Himalayan pastoralism.

The third volume reviewed here takes the reader westwards, away from the history and politics of the Himalayan region to a contemporary but apolitical setting in the Karakorum area. Ehlers and Kreutzmann's volume is a collection of seven papers, all of which are based on field research undertaken in the 1990s by German geographers in the framework of Pakistan-German collaboration under the aegis of the 'Culture Area Karakorum' project. According to the editors, this project '...has generated a wide range of new insights into the complicated interactions between nature and society in the harsh environment of northern Pakistan's high mountain belt'. The case studies published here 'centre around the general question of high mountain ecology and economy...' and concentrate '...on aspects of traditional and modern forms of montane agriculture and animal husbandry and their combined potentials for a sustainable... development of those fragile ecosystems into which they...continue to be embedded'. (Preface) This fragile ecosystem is constituted by the regions of Bagrot, Gilgit, Hunza, Yasin, Punial, Shigar and the area surrounding Nanga Parbat (map, p. 27).

In their introductory chapter, Ehlers and Kreutzmann whose publications are familiar to scholars of nomadic pastoralism in West and South Asia, summarise contemporary perspectives in cultural geography concerning the relationship between high-altitude natural environments and the economic strategies implicit in pastoralism. They go on to analyse the interplay of ecological constraints and economic possibilities provided by pastoralism in the fragile and high-risk environment of the Karakorum-Himalaya region, and the problems arising in the wake of increasingly rapid infrastructural (and social) change. They also discuss the possibilities of sustainable development in this region.

Each of the subsequent seven case studies provides detailed descriptions and discussions of mobile agro-pastoralism in the above mentioned regions. The first chapter by Georg Stöber and Hiltrud Herberts on Yasin focuses on the juridical aspects of access to pastoral resources, and on economic diversification in the current context of change. The authors would have been better advised not to attempt a superficial theoretical approach to the theme of 'domestic economies' (e.g. p. 42f.), yet on the whole this is an interesting study. In his short and descriptive rather than analytic paper (Chapter 2), Reinhard Fischer discusses socio-economic change and its impact on the use of high altitude pastures in Punial. Concerns regarding access to resources mark the third, very well informed study by Eckart Ehlers on Bagrot.

In his fine study in the following chapter, Hermann Kreutzmann subtly analyses the interaction between social change and pastoral practice in Hunza. He examines the extent to which infrastructural, economic and administrative changes have differentially impacted on mobile pastoralism and the access of pastoralists to the high mountain pastures. Drawing on his own fieldwork as well as on archival sources, Kreutzmann analyses the complex dynamics between the numerous transformations in the economy of Hunza and the exploitation of vari-



ous resources, including the high mountain pastures, in search of a largely sustainable development.

In the fifth case study, Matthias E. Schmidt focuses on rights to pasture and community-based herd management in Shigar, Baltistan. Here too, recent changes in the form of tourism and the construction of roads have greatly impacted on the lines of agro-pastoral communities and notably, their access to pastures. This in turn, is increasingly impacting on the status of pastoralism, and thus also the division of labour within pastoral households.

The next chapter, by Jürgen Clemens and Markus Nüsser, who have jointly authored many earlier studies of pastoralism in northern Pakistan, is also an excellent study of environmental change – notably population growth, the Karakorum Highway, increased tourism and mountaineering expeditions, the creation of the 'Fairy Meadows' National Park' – and the corresponding changes in agro-pastoral strategies, this time in the Nanga Parbat region.

The seventh and last chapter in this volume breaks away somewhat from the general theme of the book, in that it does not focus on change, but in a fairly static fashion on the diet of villagers in Yasin. With its rather incorrectly sweeping title, 'Why are Mountain Farmers Vegetarians? Nutritional and Non-Nutritional Dimensions of Animal Husbandry in High Asia', this chapter is based on a premise that seems entirely muddled, apart from being highly debatable: 'Like other regions in High Asia, Yasin is doubly disadvantaged in that it is not only located in a developing country but also in a high mountain area. In social, economic and infrastructural terms it therefore takes up an extremely peripheral position.' (p. 189). The author's conclusions regarding dietary intake and requirements appear flawed, and at times even contradictory. Thus on the one hand the reader is told that '...the mountain farmers in Yasin are mainly vegetarians – or even vegans ...' (p. 208), on the other hand we read that 'Chicken...is quite often served in the evenings...' (p. 196); furthermore, the table on p. 196f. sets out explicit data, according to which in December 1992/93 in one family (data on no other households are given anywhere in this study) goat meat and/or chicken was consumed at nine out of 23 meals observed.

The studies in this well produced volume provide the reader with some very valuable information on the transformations that are taking place in this part of High Asia and Pakistan. Although each deals with micro-regional specificities, taken together, they enable the reader to grasp and compare the similarities and differences between these regions. Many readers interested in the social aspects of change will, however, miss the perspective of the inhabitants of these areas, who never really appear in this volume. Their objectification is clearly demonstrated in statements such as '...the fairies, in which the local population believes' (p. 204). Another problem appears to be that of sample sizes, when quantitative data are cited (e.g. a single 'informant of Halpapa', p. 134f., or again, a single family, p. 196f.). Readers acquainted with similar transformations and problems in the broader western Himalayan region are also struck by the complete

absence of discussion on issues of political economy, individual or community-based discourses concerning resource use and any reference to economic and political networks impacting on the environment. Clemens and Nüsser (p. 179 and note 27) for example mention how, due to growing demands, livestock are brought up to the mountains.

The reader would have liked to learn something about comparative (and eventually competitive) prices and whether middlemen or trader networks with local political leaders and/or army procurers exist that perhaps encourage such imports. Similar networks exist, no doubt, in the spheres of tourism, that probably go well beyond these high mountain valleys, drawing them tighter and tighter into a rapidly globalising context. All the chapters would probably have benefited by drawing more, not only on the studies done by anthropologists within the framework of the 'Culture Area Karakorum' project itself, but also, for example, on the studies of H.M. Sidky on Hunza ('Irrigation and the Political Evolution of the High-Mountain Kingdom of Hunza', *Asian Affairs* 80 (1993), and 'Subsistence, Ecology, and Social Organization among the Hunzakut: A High-Mountain People in the Karakorams', *The Eastern Anthropologist* 46 (1993)), and of A. Knudsen on the on-going conflict concerning the creation of national parks ('Coercive Conservation in the Karakorum: Khunjerab National Park, Pakistan', *Journal of Political Ecology* 6 (1999)).

These criticisms notwithstanding, many of the general conclusions drawn in these chapters and complemented by excellent illustrations, are applicable to most, if not all, high altitude regions of the world where mobile pastoralism is practised. *High Mountain Pastoralism* is a major contribution to the field of studies on high altitude societies, and is a must for all those interested not only in Asia, but also in the Andes and other comparable environments.

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DIPAK GYAWALI, *Rivers, Technology and Society: Learning the Lessons of Water Management in Nepal*. London & New York: Zed Books, 2003. XV, 281 pages, 13 figures, 8 tables, £ 45.00/\$ 75.00. ISBN 1-84277-276-7

The debate on water use and especially the development of hydroelectric power was the major political issue in Nepal in the 1990s, though it is muted today by the Maoist insurgency. Before and during the 1990s, water was perceived as one of the most important natural resources of Nepal, and hydropower as the key to the economic development of the kingdom. The focus was on state development of large hydropower projects with huge financial support from donors for the export of power to India as a source of revenue and a panacea to Nepal's economic ills. This course of development was epitomized by the Arun-3 project in eastern Nepal, which created a controversy between proponents of large- and proponents of small- to medium-sized projects. Arun-3 was eventually