



Nepal

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Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London, Volume 54,
Issue 1 (1991), 240-241.

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Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London
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important studies by those Bangladeshi historians whose examination of the colonial period has inevitably been conducted with a keen consciousness of the needs of a new nation for a picture of the past to account for its present realities.

The period studied falls between the dates of the publication of Hunter's *The Indian Muslims* and the founding of the Muslim League. Confessedly arbitrary, these form an appropriate frame for Ahmed's main argument, which is focused upon the gradual growth of a conscious Islamic identity among the non-élite *atrap* Muslims of late nineteenth-century Bengal, following the collapse of the earlier 'Wahhabi' agitation. While the roles of both the British and the culturally dominant Bengali Hindus are considered, the book's attention is principally given to the degree to which this renewed version of Bengali Islam was developed in opposition to the *ashraf* élite's close adherence to the pan-Indian vision of a reformed Islam formulated by the Urdu-speaking Muslims of north India, which was to determine the destiny of the Muslims of East Bengal down to 1971.

Ahmed is particularly interesting on the class-determined language-loyalties of the Bengali Muslims (especially pp. 119 ff.). This is naturally one of the many themes to be raised by his principal body of source material, the popular printed tracts in versified Musalmani Bengali known as *puthi*. Since his new preface, the only addition to the first edition, deals at some length with these, it is surprising that Ahmed takes no note of Asim Roy, *The Islamic syncretist tradition in Bengal* (Princeton, 1983, reviewed in *BSOAS*, XLVIII, 3, 1985, 570–1), which draws such different conclusions about the nature of the relationship between popular Islam and popular Hinduism on the basis of the *puthi*-literature of an earlier period. Perhaps a case of you picks your *puthi*!

CHRISTOPHER SHACKLE

BEATRIX PFLEIDERER and ELISABETH BERGNER [and] REINHARD GREVE: *A bibliography on Himalayan ethnography*. (Nepal Research Centre Publications, no. 15.) [v], 136 pp. Franz Steiner Verlag, Stuttgart: 1990. DM 36.

The main problem with this compilation is that its definition of 'Himalayan ethnography' is vague. Several items treat topics which are neither 'Himalayan' (Greenwood's 1977 article—item 680—on the commercialization of a Basque festival is a prime example) nor ethnographic as such.

If one concentrates on a single subject area—language and literature, for instance—it swiftly becomes apparent that attention has been paid only to *some* languages and, furthermore, only to *some* works on those languages. To take a few examples, Turner's *Nepali dictionary* and Clark's *Introduction to Nepali* and 'Nepali and Pahādi' article are listed, but Turner's important articles and David Matthews's *A course in Nepali* (which has superseded Clark's earlier work, at least as a textbook for foreign learners) are omitted. Similarly, Grierson is apparently

regarded as important for his work on Tibeto-Burman languages (*Linguistic Survey of India*, III, pt. 1) but not for his work on Indo-Aryan languages (*LSI*, IX). Several studies of Maithili, Newari, Limbu language and literature are cited, but standard works on Nepali are ignored.

The history of the region is represented by a number of standard works, but the coverage is equally patchy. Stiller's *The silent cry*, and *The Kot massacre* are cited, but his pioneering study *The rise of the House of Gorkha* is inexplicably absent. The omission of John Whelpton's studies of the Rana regime is surprising, as is the neglect of popular anthropological literature by writers such as Galen Rowell, Christina Noble and Dervla Murphy.

There is a total of 1881 entries, arranged alphabetically by author. Indexes are appended which list entries under 45 subject-headings and 55 ethnic regional headings. From the latter index, it is interesting to note the extent to which ethnographic research in the region has concentrated on groups such as the Sherpa, the Nagas, the Newars, and the Tamangs. As a source of reference to a growing body of useful and often obscure material, the bibliography is of value. But as a full catalogue of research into Himalayan ethnography, the work is incomplete.

MICHAEL HUTT

JOHN WHELPTON and others: *Nepal*. (World Bibliographical Series, Vol. 38.) xxv, 294 pp. Oxford and Santa Barbara: Clio Press, 1990.

This bibliography comprises some 917 items, with cross-references to a hundred or so more. It covers books, articles, reports, bibliographies, maps, professional periodicals and a few Ph.D. theses published up to 1989. It does not provide a guide to manuscript, film and photographic collections, except incidentally. It is organized under thirty-three headings such as: the country and its people, traveller's accounts, geography and geology, tourist guides, flora and fauna, archaeology and pre-history, history and so on. Some of these have sub-headings. This arrangement seems helpful and sensible and the brevity of certain sections (for example archaeology and prehistory, or 'Extraterritorial populations') highlights well some important areas needing further research.

The special advantage of the bibliography is that each item has clearly been read by the editor and he provides a short summary and sometimes evaluation of the contents. In cases where I knew the work I found his evaluation very fair and judicious and he is not inhibited in his criticism, though the tone is usually positive. A helpful brief introduction describes Nepal and its peoples.

As the editor admits, he had necessarily to be selective: there have been a spate of publications since Hugh Wood's complete bibliography in 1958, and even that included some one thousand three hundred items. Although there are inevitably omissions of a few articles and good Ph.D. theses of which one knows, on the whole the choice seems fair and interesting. Of

course, where there is little written, for example on the service caste groups, there is little to report. But the sections on history, aid and development and ecology, I found particularly helpful.

The real test is how much one discovers that is new and relevant. I found fifty new references to articles and books which I now want to read. This is a large number and it seems likely that any individual researcher will find many new items. This is a nicely produced, readable, balanced and extremely useful bibliography which can be thoroughly recommended for every library, organization or individual concerned with Nepal or the Himalayas. John Whelpton and his collaborators Lucette Boulnois, David Gellner, Michael Hutt, Abhi Subedi and Carol Tingey are to be congratulated on a splendid piece of useful work.

ALAN MACFARLANE

SHAPHALYA AMATYA (ed.): *His Majesty's Government, Ministry of Finance, Department of Revenue (Record Section) and Office of the Comptroller General, Kumari Chowk Gosora*. (Source Manual Series, no. 1.) 101 pp. Kathmandu: National History Guide Committee (Nepal), n.d. NRs 25.

SHAPHALYA AMATYA: (ed.): *His Majesty's Government, Ministry of Defence, Royal Affairs (Record Section)*. (Source Manual Series, no. 2.) 164 pp. Kathmandu: National History Guide Committee (Nepal), n.d. NRs. 30.

These two guides, with editor's introductions dated 1988, are Nepalese contributions to a project on sources of Asian history sponsored by UNESCO and the International Council on Archives. They provide partial listings for four important archives: the Department of Revenue's Record Section (*Lagat Phāit*), which is principally concerned with land tenure and has been the main quarry for the economic historian Mahesh Chandra Regmī; the *Goswārā Tahabil*, which was a part of the old audit office (*Kumārī Cauk*) and acted as a depository for documents no longer needed in other government offices; Army Headquarters (*Jangī Addā*) archive, which holds some material on royal ceremonies and state visits to Nepal as well as purely military matters; and the record section of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Some two thousand documents or sets of documents are listed, arranged chronologically within different categories. The earliest securely dated items are from the eighteenth century, whilst the most recent covers President Mitterand's state visit in 1983, but most records are from the Rana period (1846–1951).

Shyam Sundar Rajbhanshi, the epigraphist who seems to have done most of the spadework, had a difficult task. Though there has been some recent progress, Nepalese archives, with the notable exception of the relatively small *Jangī*

Addā, remain in a disorganized state. Various disasters, most recently the 1973 fire which destroyed much of the Singha Durbar, have taken their toll, catalogues are incomplete, the documents within a single cloth-bound bundle may be on unconnected subjects, and the bundles themselves are not always clearly numbered.

Under these circumstances, the result is creditable, even if marred by more than the usual crop of misprints and (especially in the first volume) some writing which is less than clear. The descriptions, varying between bare titles and paragraph-length synopses, give a reasonable idea of the range of material available, whilst an introductory essay in the second volume gives a useful survey of Nepalese archives in general, and an explanation of the different types of document (*lāl mohar*, *khadga nishāna*, etc.) issued in the names of the King or the Rana Maharaja. Facsimiles of specimen documents are included as annexes.

The introductions to the four individual collections include information on organization and on obtaining access. The latter can be a particular problem for foreign scholars. In 1982/3, when I applied to use the Foreign Ministry archive, I was told that non-Nepali researchers could not be admitted, because, while documents remained unsorted, it was impossible to ensure they did not see sensitive material on the more recent past. In contrast, getting into the *Jangī Addā* involved me in a long wait but no great difficulty. The situation has apparently now altered, since Guide no. 2 says only that 'more priority' is given at the Foreign Ministry to those from government-affiliated institutions than to private individuals (p. 81), whereas foreigners are 'as a rule' barred from the *Jangī Addā* (p. 15).

JOHN WHELPTON

INTERNATIONAL COUNCIL OF ARCHIVES: *Guide to the sources of Asian history: India 3.1: National Archives*. xi, 165 pp. New Delhi: National Archives of India, 1987.

This volume is the first in the series 'Guide to the Sources of Asian History' pertaining to India. It forms part of a comprehensive UNESCO project initiated in 1959 in collaboration with the International Council of Archives. The Asian section of the project was inaugurated in 1979, and among the twelve countries participating, India has been allocated the series number 3 for its guides. The present volume is the first of a projected six guides which are to serve as a major reference tool for holdings of archival repositories and other custodial institutions in India. The volumes have been planned as follows:

Vol. 3, nos. 1, 2: Guides to Records in the National Archives of India.

Vol. 3, nos. 3, 4, 5: Guides to records in the state/union territory archives in India.

Vol. 3, no. 6: Directory of custodial institutions in India having records and manuscripts.

The first two volumes relate to records of the National Archives of India covering 30 kilometres of shelf space, from the year 1630 to