SHORT REVIEWS

* Books

THE TIBETAN ART OF HEALING By Theodore Burang.

This book is a revised edition and translation of the author’s *Tibetische Heilkunde,* Zurich 1957. Through prolonged contact with adepts of the traditional Tibetan medical science, the author has gained a high degree of insight into this “art of healing.” The present book is a short, highly readable introduction to the basic principles and practices of Tibetan medicine. It is written for the non-specialist; however, the author has much to say which, one feels, might provide food for thought for the Western medical practitioner as well. Thus, “methods which aim at removing only the outward symptoms of disease, strike the Tibetan doctor as superficial. To his way of thinking, a lasting cure can only be effected when the whole mental and emotional world of the patient is taken into account” (p. 2). In particular, the two chapters “About Cancer” (pp. 76-88) and “Mental Illness and Possession” (pp. 89-107) would seem to contain many insights which merit very serious attention.

P. K.

GLIMPSES OF NEPAL WOODWORK. By Shantaram Bhalchandra Deo.

*Glimpses of Nepal Woodwork* is one of the earliest studies devoted to the structural and ornamental woodworking tradition of the Newar craftsmen of Nepal. In an unpretentious, though at times perhaps too casual, style the author has given a general account of the distinctive ornamental features of traditional architecture found in the major centers of the Kathmandu Valley.

The work is arranged in 24 titled sections. The first five sections (Prologue, Historical Background, Cultural Contacts, Scope and Aims, and Nature of the Data) include a broad historical and cultural discussion, bringing the reader as briefly as possible up to the period under study, 17th to 19th century. In summarizing the history of major influences upon the traditional architecture and upon the composite culture of Nepal, the author discusses the early legacy of Indian art, religion, and philosophy; the later contacts with Tibet and China; and at last a brief exposure to Moghul and Rajput motifs and styles, leading into the 19th century. He takes us then to the architectural forms themselves as found in the temples, vihāra-s, palaces, and private residences he has chosen for examination. As the author indicates, the foundations
of these structures may in some cases be dated as early as the 14th or 15th century, based on historical and inscriptive data. However, as they exist today they represent largely the composite of numerous additions and restorations.

In three short sections, pages 14 to 18, we find a tantalizingly brief discussion of The Artisans, Tools and Apparatus, and Technique. We are introduced to a number of Newari technical, descriptive, and iconographical terms, many possibly being identified for the first time in such a publication. Clearly there exists a technical vocabulary of precise architectural terms, used by the traditional artisans themselves, which could well replace the often quite inappropriate European terms. Examples of the more distinctive terms found in Newari are indicated intermittently thorough the sections titled The Doors, The Pillars, The Brackets, and Entablature.

In the section on The Struts, on page 28, the author establishes that, "The general nomenclature for struts is vilampu as used by the carpenters of Bhadgāon and Kāthmāndu, while the Pātan carpenters call the struts vilampan. The corner struts of the vyāla motif are classified into four categories:

1. Siṅgha: lion,
2. Bhēnṛsiṅgha: ram-horned lion,
3. Maṅga siṅgha: goat-horned lion, and
4. Garuḍa siṅgha: Garuda-faced lion."

However, one can take this subject a bit further. We are informed by Newar traditional carpenters in Patan that the generic term for strut is tunā (तुना), meaning any plain brace or support for the eaves of the roof. According to the sikarti-s or master carpenters, only a strut carved with the figure of a deity is called bilānpau (बिलाई) which appears to be a variant rendering of the terms vilampu and vilampan given by the author. The corner strut, however, is distinguished by the carpenters of Patan by the technical term kuñ sala (कूँसल) meaning, "corner horse". The word is used to indicate the corner tunā, whether it depicts a lion or other animal, or whether it is left uncarved. There seems to be need for greater clarity. One could make other small objections, such as to the use of the term "griffin" for kun sala. "Griffin" is perhaps a reasonable equivalent for the Garuda singha, since it is a Western evolution of the early Iranian and Central Asian prototypes from which the Indian varieties of beaked, winged, lion-bodied vyāla forms are also evolved.

A very useful addition to Glimpses of Nepal Woodwork would have been a glossary of fully defined terms relating to the technical aspects of art and architecture that are discussed in the volume. Such a glossary could form the systematic beginning of a work that is much needed in the study of Nepalese architecture. Any tradition deserves to be described wherever possible in the terminology most appropriate to its culture. The author should be commended for making an early suggestive step in that direction.
The section describing The Windows is evidently of special interest to the author. A large number of the plates, both photographs and drawings, illustrate aspects of the infinitely varied ornamental windows. A transitional 19th century window (Plate XXIII, No. 3) with undertones of Nepalese and European Neo-classical hybridization, is not discussed. A carved grille (Plate XXXV, No. 8) clearly influenced by early 19th century European design, is also not discussed.

One must remark that the many small illustrations, some only of incomplete views, are far less informative than larger, more visually telling photographs of the really excellent examples would have been, even if fewer in number. This criticism might be made of many of the photographs of windows (Plates XX-XXIII) and of other illustrations, e.g. the struts in Plates XVIII and XIX. The magnificent torana from Chusyabahal, Kathmandu (Plate XXXVI, No. 7) could have visually told us much more about the basic form, structure, and iconography of “the torana” if it had been given half the page or a full page, rather than being reduced to a minute $1\frac{1}{2}'' \times 2\frac{1}{2}''$ block. On the other hand, the line drawings (of pillars, Plates IX and X; of types of window decoration, Plates XXIX-XXXIV) and the photographs of doorframe orders (Plate XI), with terminology indicated in the case of the pillars and doorframe orders, are certainly to the point.

The author continues with short sections on The Tympanum, The Wall Band, Eave Boards, The Erotic Scenes, Symbolism, Social Life; and last, The Epilogue. In this latter section the author restates somewhat more extensively his earlier statement of connections with South India, particularly with reference to “Nânyadeva of Simrâongarh (11th-12th cent.), who called himself ‘the ornament of Karnataka family’, (p. 44). A brief comparison is made of architectural features of the Chalukyas with those of Nepal.

Such a comparison might also be made with the wooden architecture of the 16th to 18th century in Gujarat or in Kerala, which were at the very border of Karnataka power and received direct and sustained Chalukyan influence during the 11th and 12th centuries. Chalukyan style and architectural theory were continued in the South by the Hoysalas into the beginning of the 14th century. The 16th to 18th century architecture of Kerala particularly bears a number of striking correspondences to the wooden architecture of Nepal from the same period. Largely constructed of wood, brick and plaster upon stone socles, Kerala’s temples have corresponding carved struts (Malayalam tānḷu) depicting the gods, supporting the eaves of often multiroofed superstructures. The custom of placing a carved wooden strut depicting a rampant simha vyāla at the corners supporting the roofs is also a common practice and strikingly like the Nepalese tradition. The intricate and ornamental carved Kerala woodwork is most often polychromed as well, and a variety of pierced ornamental wooden screens
or jāla is common. The roofs of temples are often sheathed in copper and surmounted by gilded finials or tazhikakūtam as they are known in Kerala. Cast as well as repousse ornamental hardware and decorative devices are commonly found as architectural embellishments. Again this is a usage characteristic of the architecture of Nepal as well.

There are indeed similarities, but to say that “somehow the influence of South India on the history and architecture of Nepal has been considerable” (p. 44) is still premature. A short reference is made to the South Indian “Vāstuśāstra text—especially the Mānasara”, and the author detects in the wooden architecture of Nepal architectural features described in this text attributed to the 7th to 9th century (p. 45). However relating the precepts of early texts to later traditional architecture is difficult even under more favorable circumstances. Until it is established that such a text as the Mānasāra or other South Indian works on śilpaśāstra were in use in Nepal, or until a thorough study is made of the history of dated architectural texts known to have been in use in Nepal, we should not jump to hurried or romantic conclusions on the basis of what is still very slim evidence. It is reasonable to expect that in late medieval times two secluded areas on the periphery of an ever-changing India might preserve and continue to develop many of the ancient forms and techniques of wooden architecture. Today, the tradition of wooden temple architecture, having died out in most of the South Asian subcontinent, lingers on in Kerala, and only in Nepal does it survive in such vital abundance and infinite variety. A comparative study could certainly be done. There are ample textual materials as well as hundreds of examples of architecture in these two areas that have only recently begun to be examined in any detail.

The author of Glimpses of Nepal Woodwork has produced in his short work a remarkably swift and broad overview with many useful and controversial points not presented previously. Minor criticisms aside, the author should be commended for having made the first attempt at an extended presentation of the subject. He has clearly demonstrated that there is a very real need for further systematic research.

The work is somewhat loosely footnoted: there is a short, but well chosen, bibliography of 18 entries.

Clifford Reis Jones
TRAUMLAND NEPAL. By Dietmar Frank.

192 pp. incl. 116 colour plates, one block-print on orange cloth of a 
Buddhist prayer flag, and one 24 page travel guide pamphlet. Published by 

The title of this book—"Dreamland Nepal"—indicates a romanticendeavour, and 
so it is. Mr. Frank has visited Nepal many times, and done a number of treks with his 
Sherpa friends and companions, as well as several trips to Marpha in Mustang where 
he also has friends. As the book is intended for the general reader, and to impress by 
its colour plates rather than by the text, the chapters are short though not necessarily 
concise. The text is supplemented, however, by a number of schematic profiles, maps 
and tables, which tend to increase the value of the text. However, this book should be 
bought because of the marvellous colour plates. Mr. Frank evidently has had time and 
opportunity to record Nepal as its best. Almost all photographs are taken at the right 
season from the right place and at the right time of the day. If one knows Nepal well, 
one realizes the time and patience which lie behind these pictures. On the other hand, 
one also realizes this is an unreal and overly romantic portrait. The book is a colourful 
festival from beginning to end—subtly and richly presented. The hard realities of the 
Nepalese working day are nowhere to be found: the heavy-laden porter, villagers pitted 
against soil erosion or floods, the malnourished child or the goitre-plagued grand-
mother. But as the book is intended for coffee-table purposes in the affluent drawing-
room, such an approach in understandable.

H.K.K.


This summary of German research in Nepal is a useful publication. It contains a 
brief historical description of research by (West) German scholars in Nepal during 
the past 25 years (Part I), a subjectwise list of scholars with some biographical and research data, and a list of German institutions sponsoring work in Nepal (Part II), an 
authorwise bibliography with a subject index (Part III), along with an Index of persons and institutions.

This publication concerns itself only with basic or pure research and not with so-called applied research. A few works by non-Germans are also included in the Bibliography, as they have, or have had, some direct connection with German projects in Nepal or with German institutions.

In terms of number of items (articles, short communications etc.) published on a given subject, the survey reveals that Zoology is the most important followed by Geo-
graphy and Botany/Limnology. However, in terms of detailed studies published, such as books or long monographs, social sciences and humanities are by far the most substantial fields for German researchers. (Auer, Donner, Frank, Funke, Gutschow, Kaschewsky, Köllver, Oppitz, etc).

The bibliography is deficient in that the entries do not show the number of pages of books/monographs, or the page references for articles in journals or anthologies.

As this publication is not for sale, it can presumably be obtained by writing to Dr. Andras Höfer, South Asian Institute, University of Heidelberg, 6900 Heidelberg, W. Germany.

H.K.K

DOLPO. COMMUNAUTES DE LANGUE TIBETAINE DU NEPAL. By Corneille Jest. 481 pp. (incl. 129 figs, 211 b/w photos, 4 colour photos, 8 maps).


In pictures of haunting, often stunning beauty, and in short prose passages which not seldom attained a lyrical quality, the author succeeded in giving an impressionistic, yet sensitive and coherent picture of one of the last areas of practically untouched traditional Tibetan culture.

In an appreciative review of that book, Michael Oppitz, Kailash, III, 2 (1975) commented that "the picture has to be replaced in the end by verbal explanation". And this is precisely what the present work does. Not that it does not contain significant pictorial documentation—on the contrary, the illustrations are abundant and well-chosen, presenting work-processes and other activities in a systematic way. However, the scope of the present study is strictly empirical, making use of systematic inventory and statistical analysis, remaining, at the same time, highly readable for the non-specialist.

The author covers practically all aspects of life in Dolpo, with a certain emphasis on economic and social life. He arranges his material in conventional order, starting with a description of the physical setting and milieu of Dolpo ("Les elements du milieu" pp. 33-100), then giving a detailed analysis of the means of production and exchange, in short, of the economic life ("La production et l'économie", pp. 101-206), devoting the third part of the work to the existence of the inhabitants of Dolpo as social beings ("La vie sociale", pp. 209-288), and concluding with a description of religious concepts, institutions and practices ("La vie religieuse" pp. 289-380).
There can be no question of giving even a brief abstract of the contents of this work; it contains an inexhaustible wealth of information for students of any aspect of the culture or geography of the Himalayan area. In order merely to indicate the exhaustive thoroughness of the author, a more detailed presentation of Part II, dealing with production and economic life, may be given. Thus under *Agriculture* (pp. 105-134), the author deals with: types of soil; organization of irrigation; the growing of barley (the staple crop), each stage in the process of cultivation being described in detail; religious rites connected with the agricultural calendar; and other crops grown in Dolpo and the surrounding areas. Turning to *Livestock-Raising* (pp. 135-154), he deals with each particular type of domestic animal found in Dolpo; the annual grazing cycle; ownership of live-stock; and protection of flocks. Thereafter, he describes the mechanisms of *Trade* (in the form of barter) (pp. 155-116) which play a crucial role in making life in Dolpo possible, describing the principles, history, mechanism, psychology, products, and measures of exchange. The author then turns to a carefully documented, house-by-house inventory of the *Economic Output* of that valley in Dolpo on which he has focused his investigations, viz. Tarap, as well as to taxation (pp. 171-178). Finally he discusses the various sources of *Nutrition* (pp. 179-188): wild plants, barley (tsampa, beer), milk (butter, cheese), meat, and tea, as well as various forms of production based on skin, wool, wood, and metal (pp. 189-206).

Although the perspective of the present study is on the whole synchronic, presenting conditions in Dolpo as they were during the 1960's, it is also historic for two reasons: firstly, the pattern of daily life, social relations and religious beliefs had, at the time of the author's stay in Dolpo, hardly changed for many centuries. The book therefore provides an entirely valid, detailed and living background-picture for the study of historical texts, like the brilliant translations of local hagiographies by Professor David L. Snellgrove (*Four Lamas of Dolpo*, Oxford 1967). Secondly, the conditions which the author describes and which still prevailed in Dolpo in the 1960's are rapidly undergoing change, whether the inhabitants of Dolpo like it or not: the historical forces of the collapse of traditional civilization in Tibet due to the political changes in that country, and the urge towards modernization emanating from a dynamic and developing Nepal of which the Dolpopas too are citizens, exert an inexorable pressure on traditional social, economic and cultural patterns. Indeed, as the author points out (p. 384), conditions in Dolpo—an area which remained through the centuries far away from the centres of Tibetan civilization—have a certain archaic aspect, which other Tibetans are not slow to notice: thus the custom of marriage with matrilineral cousins prevails in Dolpo, a union which in recent times has been considered incestuous in Tibet itself.

The author is eminently well qualified for the task he has set himself; i.e. to give an integral description of life in Dolpo, having visited Dolpo four times between
1960 and 1967, including a stay of a whole year in 1960-61. The present volume (which together with ethnomelographic collections of 550 objects from Dolpo, herbariums, tape recordings, films, and more than 6000 photographs represents the immediate result of his field-work) will be indispensable for anyone concerned with the culture, social and daily life, or geography of Tibet and the Himalaya. At the same time, the author’s sympathy for the people of Tarap, reflected in a sensitive and detailed documentation of their world, makes this book more than an inventory of a society doomed to rapid change, but also—and above all—a deeply moving human document.

P. K.

AN INTRODUCTION TO TIBETAN MEDICINE. Edited by Dawa Norbu. 95 pp.
New Delhi 1976. (A Tibetan Review Publication) Price: Rs. 8

Tibetan medicine, one of the branches of traditional Tibetan knowledge, is moving more and more into the field of attention not only of Tibetologists, but also of Western medical science and a large and growing group of non-specialists. This is a collection of short essays on various aspects of Tibetan medicine. Most of them have been published in Tibetan Review, including the special issue (May/June 1974) focusing on Tibetan medicine. Bhagwan Dash, “Indian Contribution to Tibetan Medicine” (pp. 12-24) has been published in The Tibet Journal, Vol. 1 no. 1 (July/September 1975) pp. 94-104, under the title “Ayurveda in Tibet”. On p. 13 (bottom) of the present publication, the paragraph beginning “The following are the details of the Ayurvedic works…should be placed after” the following paragraph.

The article by William Stabilein, “Tibetan Medical-Cultural System” (pp. 39-51) has been published in Kailash, vol. 1, 3 (1973) pp. 193-203 under the more informative title “A Medical-Cultural System Among the Tibetan and Newar Buddhists: Ceremonial Medicine”.

“Tibetan Medicine on Cancer” by Theodore Burang (pp. 52-61) corresponds to the chapter “About Cancer” (pp. 76-88) in the same author’s The Tibetan Art of Healing (see above). Other articles of special interest are Alex Wayman’s “Buddhist Tantric Medicine Theory” (pp 33-38) as well as contributions by B. C. Olschak, Yeshe Dhonden Jeffrey Hopkins, and Kesang Tenzin. The address list of “Tibetan Physicians in Exile” (pp. 73-77) is a useful addition.

The booklet does not, in the words of the editor, pretend to provide more than “a sort of appetizer” with regard to a vast and highly complex subject. Nevertheless, Dawa Norbu is to be congratulated on this effort to popularize a subject which may yet turn out to be one of the most important contributions of Tibetan civilization to the world.

P. K.
Short Reviews / 405

VISUAL DHARMA: THE BUDDHIST ART OF TIBET. By Chögyam Trungpa. xii + 140 pp. incl. 54 b/w plates and one colour plate.

This volume is the joint work of the Nalanda Foundation (recently founded by Chögyam Trungpa) and the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (M. I. T.) Office of Exhibitions, based on an exhibition of the art work depicted in the book itself. It contains a greeting from H. H. Dalai Lama, and a foreword by the Director of Exhibitions at M. I. T. The volume was compiled in an effort to provide an authoritative perspective on Tibetan religious art. It is divided into an introduction and 26 pages of explanatory text, followed by 54 black and white plates, and a four page glossary. Each plate is accompanied by a brief commentary.

In the text, the author sketches briefly the historical and stylistic influences from neighbouring Buddhist Asia on the Tibetan art tradition, as well as the technical and physical characteristics of tankas, and their devotional aspects. There is also a hierarchic outline of the deities in the Tibetan pantheon in a section entitled "Elements of Iconography".

The text itself is a bit lean in its treatment of historical and stylistic developments; but has a good explanation of the religious and secular use of sacred images as an aid to visualization in the Sadhana, or tantric, meditation with which they are intimately tied. The author also deals nicely with the rather academic issue of whether the manifold divinities in the Tibetan assembly can properly be called "deities" in the theosophical sense. There is a good analysis of the main gods of the pantheon, classified and described according to their various attributes, symbolism, accoutrements, and place in the practice of the Dharma. What is lacking in the iconography section is amply filled by the individual commentaries on the plates, where the symbolic accoutrements, asana, mudra, colours and forms are spelt out for each deity.

In general, there is good complementarity between the text portion and the plates section, although I am certain only a very few people in or outside Tibet could distinguish the four schools of painting based on the specimens in this volume.

The text itself is brief and factual, and seems to be aimed at the literate layman. It hardly presupposes a complete coverage of Tibetan art, however. Bronzes in particular are poorly represented (only 9 specimens viewed from the front) and most of the discussion is devoted to tankas. In addition, some of the best examples of the pure Tibetan idiom which are found in paintings and sculptures depicting the lives of saints, and in various historical work, free from the strict canonical guidelines governing the main deities, allows for perhaps the fullest expression of the unique Tibetan style. Also regretably, save the frontispiece, all plates are black and white. There is a mis-numbering of pages in the copy in my possession resulting in an absent page (p. 122).
On the whole, however, this work is brief, factual, and comes from a reliable and authoritative figure in Buddhist tradition. Hardly a scholarly encyclopaedic volume of the scope of Professor Tucci’s works, it is a handy volume for someone who wishes to gain an introductory familiarity with tantric imagery from an authoritative source. The short glossary is also useful.

Terrence J. Sullivan

*Journals*

_Hokke-Bunka Kenyu_, or Journal of the Institute for the Comprehensive Study of Lotus Sutra. No. 1, March 1975. 45+132 pp. Published by the Institute for the Comprehensive Study of Lotus Sutra (CSLS), Rissho University, 4-2-16 Osaki, Shinagawaku, Tokyo, Japan. Price: n.a.


H.K.K.


From time to time, we are elegantly reminded that Paris is one of the leading centres for the study of Nepal and the Himalaya. In the Autumn of 1966, _Objets et Mondes_ published its first issue (100 pages) devoted exclusively to Nepal, with contributions by J. Millot, D. Snellgrove, M. Gaborieau, M. Helffer, A. W. Macdonald and C. Jest. In the Spring of 1969, another splendid issue on Nepal appeared, containing 142 pages of articles by K. B. Bista, M. Gaborieau, M. Helffer, C. Jest, A. W. Macdonald, J. Reinhard, P. Sagant and S. Thierry.

The Winter 1974 issue is more voluminous and extensive in geographical coverage than any of the previous ones, although there are fewer in-depth studies and also more emphasis on geographical and purely ecological studies than in the previous issues.
With the exception of one article on the architecture of Bhutan, Nepal is the focus of attention. There are four contributions on the Kali Gandaki area, and a brief but interesting description by C. Jest of the communities far north-west along the Seti river. G. Toffin writes on the Ankhü Khola settlements, J. M. Sacherer on the Rolwaling Valley and M. Goldstein on the people of Limi in the extreme north-west of Nepal. D. A. Messerschmidt has contributed a fine study of the Gurung shepherds of Lamjung Himal. There are also general articles on Himalayan demography, geography, etc., including a brief but good general survey of the Himalayan environment by J. F. Dobremez. It is not possible to review here the whole issue in detail, but it is hoped the above will give our readers a general idea of the content. As usual, the photographic illustrations are exquisite, and graphs and maps well executed. Overall editing and organization is also of a very high standard.

H.K.K.


Tartu State University, which was founded in 1802, is one of the oldest higher institutions of learning in the Soviet Union, and Oriental studies have been undertaken since the 1830’s, according to one of the articles in volume I of this anthology.

The 24 papers printed in volume I were read at the 10th Anniversary of the Oriental Department in 1965, and comprise works by Estonian as well as other philologists of the Soviet Union. The articles are either in Russian, Estonian, French or German, with summaries in either English, German, Estonian or Russian. Most papers are concerned with indological or sinological subjects, but a few may be of interest to Kailash’s readers, viz. B. D. Dandaron: “Elements des abhangigen Entstehens auf Grund tibetanischen Quellen” (in Russian); Lennart Mall: “Bemerkungen zum Prajnaparamitischen Metalogik” (in Estonian); or A. M. Piatigorsky: “On the psychological contents of early Buddhism” (in Russian), etc. (Titles quoted in the languages of the summaries.)

Volume II is very extensive, and concentrates on philological aspects of ancient Indian culture, particularly the Sanskrit grammarian Panini. This volume contains work by scholars from other countries as well. There is one article related to Tibetology, “Contents of the Mantra om-ma-ni-pad-me-hum” by B. D. Dandaron (Ulan Ude).

Copies of these journals may still be obtainable from the Oriental Department, Tartu State University, Tartu, Estonia, USSR.

H.K.K.