

BLOOD AND TERRITORY AS IDIOMS OF NATIONAL IDENTITY IN HIMALAYAN STATES¹

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Introduction

This is an account of the formation of modern ethnic and national identities in the Himalaya. These can be seen as a result of the successive interplay of two principles of association in civil society, namely 'blood' or kinship, and 'territory'. These factors have long been recognised in anthropology as key features of political association in local communities, such as with local lineages and villages. The progression set in force by the colonial encounter elevated these two themes largely as idioms of nation and state. From one side this is the history of contact with the British Raj and the overall imperial relations between China, Britain and Russia from the late eighteenth century onwards. On the other side it is also an account of a transition of local socio-cultural forms in a more traditional Asian religious hierarchy, with a change to more modern territorial forms of imperial integration. This, in turn, has led to a more modern political segmentation and state formation.

The ideas introduced reflect more general principles. Put simply, at one extreme might be found the model of Empire, with an expanding integration of all within the ambit of its territorial control into a wide hierarchic social order;

¹ An earlier version of this article, entitled "Blood, Territory and National Identity in Himalayan States" is currently in press, in Stein Tønneson and Hans Antlöv, eds, *Asian Forms of Nation*, NIAS/ Curzon Press, 1996.

at the other extreme the model would be a fundamental nationalism in which all within the fixed bounds of the territory have to be the same in kind, and those deemed to be of different blood are, one way or another, removed. Somewhere in between we find the particular compromise of the 'nation-state'. Historical changes in identity can be seen as the swing of a pendulum back-and-forth between the primacy of these two forms of civil political association, played out at different levels.

There is an irony in this supposed progression. The power of the British Empire to control this area was a pre-condition for the transfer of the ideological model of the nation-state. Through the colonial imposition of these 'state-nations' there arose an 'imagined community', projected not only outwards in space but also backwards in time in the guise of nation-states. This gave rise to segmentary, modern, nationalist movements that were consciously extended out from the capitals within the colonially-secured bounds of those newly-formed borders.

The Himalayan Region

The geographical limits of the region to be considered extend in the west from the Hindu Kush and modern Afghanistan to the Hengduan range north of Upper Burma. For reasons of space only one Himalayan case is considered in some depth, that is Nepal which, though in formal terms sovereign and independent of the British Raj, had its future closely defined by that imperial contact. There is also illustrative comparative material from Afghanistan, Baltistan, and Ladakh.

There is at least one important difference between the Himalaya and elsewhere in Asia where traditional states have been incorporated into modern empires, and then give rise to their own states in a western image. In the Himalaya, any such clear progression as detailed above is constrained by the mountain topography, and there is a continual tendency to drop back into more local relations. The progression is not inevitable and Nepal, as it was once remarked apocryphally, may be entering the nineteenth century from both ends travelling in both directions simultaneously. In the Himalaya, the extremes of integration that we may see elsewhere in the full swing from blood, through territory and back to blood again, have not managed to pass as freely or as fully through the Himalaya as in the plains societies to their south. The mountains act as moderators, physical baffles to the full and lasting

incursion of fundamental social changes, whether these are the forces of religion, the economic market, or of nationalism. The isolating topography promotes great diversity, and wider social movements that in the lowlands might carry all before them, in the Himalaya have to adapt to this diversity to gain more than a temporary or nominal extension.

Traditionally, separate local 'social strata' were differentiated on the ground by their location above and below each other, but this was not the outcome of extreme localised isolation *per se*. Rather it was part of a local hierarchy in which these groups were linked by their exchange in a political and symbolic economy of complementary agrarian goods and ritual services, up and down the mountainside. Status could be specified by reference to a local territory, often through a village name; status was also often specified through kinship, that is through common descent or blood which reproduced itself from generation to generation, whose members usually thought of themselves in some wider sense all as 'the same' in natural type, that is as 'kin'. Overall, the picture evoked is that of a territorial area made up of small village enclaves, each integrated with others in the locality by relations of kinship, economic exchange and political authority, each local cluster of enclaves existing as a variation within a broader set of such possible cultural and political contexts. The patterns of these territories were variously elaborated according to wider history and natural circumstances, with a progressive change along these dimensions from one area to another across the Himalaya.

At the present day there is still a large local degree of heterogeneity, which gives the overall appearance of a variegated social and ecological 'patchwork', that is an extreme localised segmentation giving rise to patterns that progressively vary. In this structure each local group can be characterised along a range of possible natural, socio-cultural and economic dimensions; each occupies one possible set of positions across these various dimensions, along which they are related to others both historically and structurally, with clusters of larger groups forming as sets of variations on related groups of themes. It follows that scientifically, the Himalaya is important as a natural laboratory of human social and historical variation. Compared to many other mountain areas it is densely populated; but this is not a uniformly distributed or homogenous population. A contorted maze of ridges and rivers has created a territorial and social mosaic, and has laid out separate, terraced enclaves along the convoluted slopes and side-valleys of the High Himalaya. These mountain enclaves cluster together along valley systems like so many buds on the branch of a tree, often with their own, separate and tortuous access.

Despite the high profile of development programmes the topography still acts centripetally, and restricts communication to maintain as separate entities valley systems which may be no more than small, spatial, clusters of enclaves. These clusters have linkages and relations with others beyond their local territory; but the degree of routine separation is such that many have developed apart, giving rise to varied histories within a local area. Today, though the narrow strip of the southern plains has an increasingly large percentage of the population, some 90% of the territory of Nepal is mountainous: in 1985, only some 8% of the population inhabited urban areas of Nepal; in 1989, some 70% per cent of the population of Nepal was still more than one day's round-trip by foot from a road, and of the 71 districts 21 had no motorised roads (World Bank 1989, vol. 1, Table 2.5; 1990, vols. 1 and 2).

Adjacent territory, that is occupying sequential positions in the same two-dimensional space, is one way of ascribing a wider common identity in relation to the state as a whole. In mountain areas there is a further ready way of sorting local groups together, in terms of 'upland' and 'lowland', that is in terms of a third, vertical, spatial dimension. In the Himalaya there is a recognised correlation between being Tibetan Buddhist, upland and pastoral, and being Hindu, lowland and agricultural, with so-termed 'tribals' between various kinds of dependent relations. To a degree this is an accurate empirical description; at the same time it also is a symbolic statement on the status of people's status relative to each other, of a hierarchy of 'above' and 'below', and so acts prescriptively as a stereotype to reinforce a social order.² For example, the 'tribals' who are defined as a residual category are as a veritable black-box of backwardness from both the viewpoints of western and eastern literate civilisations, and so in populist terms are ranked in a subordinate place in the social order. Such a hierarchic conception is both an aspect of the local order and is important in following how regional groups become incorporated into nations within the fixed, territorial, borders of a dominant state, and more widely into empires.

In such a configuration local ethnic groups do not exist as sub-types of an absolute, higher-order, ethnic identity, but rather represent a particular set of positions within this wider multidimensional framework. For example, there is no real 'Sherpa' cultural prototype but only a cluster of related Sherpa ideals and social forms linked by various cultural and other roots, as set out by these

² For an account of the application of hierarchy in highland Nepal see Clarke 1985:193-209.

dimensions of difference. Hence, with the exception of a total separation, the question is not whether or not a group 'really' is or is not Sherpa, but in what ways is it similar or linked to other groups who are also termed Sherpa. The wider groups of peoples and nations singled out in the modern Himalayan states have a particular historical and political importance. However, analytically, these categories are just one such dimension in terms of which local groups may be so placed together for consideration. When viewed from a more modern consciousness of nation and state, some communities represent what elsewhere appears to exist only as a bygone stage in a historical process. This phenomenon of the contact of the pre-modern with the modern, of different ages co-existing at one point in time, can be seen today at virtually any road or terminus in Nepal, where buses seem to collect people from different times as much as places. People, clothed in homespun carrying wickerwork baskets and walking along the road within eyeshot of the capital, Kathmandu, can still state that they 'are going to Nepal'. In using the term 'Nepal' in this way they follow the general pre-modern use for the Kathmandu Valley as a sacred space of the three royal cities, and not for the entire region within the boundaries of the modern state of Nepal.

The co-existence of these different ages and spaces is maintained by the isolation and topography of the Himalaya. This has an additional effect beyond social heterogeneity as it 'hard-wires' in local territorial divisions as social divisions. Common territory is one important aspect of identity in the Himalaya, and to the outsider such a collection of village enclaves and their local river-valley system may well appear as a single unit. Yet within the local territory other factors of status and identity, as defined by kinship, caste and economic position will often cross-cut these divisions. Locally, these will serve to differentiate one group from another. Yet these local lines of difference are also wider lines of incorporation beyond the local territory, and at times *any* such factor may extend outwards in a unifying manner and become important to a consideration of national identity in Nepal, or elsewhere. It is along these lines that other, wider, social activities, such as traditional pilgrimage, the visit of a high religious dignitary, military conquest, and now modern electoral campaigns and migration, can be mobilised. Historically, what were formerly only such *local* features may progress to stand for wider wholes, such as ethnic and national identity in the context of the state; at the same time, the problems of communication and transport which still exist today across an extreme mountainous terrain imply a continual tendency for routine relations to drop back into the local space, and to be encapsulated in *local* relations of territory and kinship.

One may come from a certain place, let us say 'Gorkha', and therefore in that territorial sense one *is* a Gorkha. Yet within that local territory, the routine social baggage of differences is likely to make any such common place a fact of little diacritical importance. A feeling of commonality between people who come from the same place may be more important away from the home area than in the original area itself. Such a contextually segmentary basis to identity was first proposed in the anthropological literature for Nilotic Africa, and also for peoples to the north-west of the Himalaya in Afghanistan and Pakistan.³ In the capital city, in the national army, trading in India, in the civil service, in metropolitan areas a common local origin may indicate a presumed historical and cultural 'sameness'. Overall, a set of identities defined by a common territorial space may come to make up a greater political whole in an urban or metropolitan setting.

New interactions in modern urban contexts are one of the main factors in the creation of country-wide identities, whether for sub-groups such as 'the Sherpa' or for overall 'national' identity. In Kathmandu, people from the same local areas but of differing Hindu and Tibetan cultural backgrounds live in close quarters where they associate together routinely in ways they would not back in their home area itself. When people from a local area are brought together with others from wider afield in novel institutions located in urban areas, it is socially functional to co-operate and forget what were locally salient differences. The focus is the territory, which acts as a symbol of common culture and identity. That modern ethnic identities tend to appear first at the time of the creation of the state was first established for Nilotic Africa,⁴ and more recently has been termed 'ethnicisation' in accounts of state-local relations in South-East Asia (see Salemink 1995). The ways in which putative territorial and kin identifications have become key features for modern, ethnic-like, national identities in the Himalaya is a point to be developed here.

In anthropological theory such grouping by kinship, especially in the assumption of a common descent, and grouping by contiguity within a local area, have long been seen as two main ways of forming a local political community. The classic distinction was put forward by Henry Maine in the mid-nineteenth century and can be paraphrased as that between the two

³ On segmentary identity see Evans-Pritchard 1940; Barth 1959.

⁴ On Nilotic ethnicities see Southall 1970:28-50.

principles of 'Blood' and 'Territory'.⁵ Though Maine saw kinship or 'blood' as the earlier institution, he also referred to the historical process by which the basis of a community which originally might have been formed through territorial association subsequently was likely to become recast or re-interpreted in terms of blood relations (Maine 1912: 137, 225). The general salience of these two principles of land and blood for the processes specifying the identity of Himalayan peoples is suggested by two ethnographic facts: first, that the names of local lineages often are taken from the name of the place of origin of an earlier ancestor; second, that settlement and intermarriage in a village commonly come to be regarded in subsequent generations as descent through the collateral line, that is as a 'blood' relation of kinship.

Though he did not develop this point into a theory of nationalism, Maine also thought of this distinction as applying at a higher political level, that is for national identity at the level of the overall state. He illustrated this idea as the difference between 'Britain' as the area occupied by the British people, and 'the British people' as constituting those who variously occupy the territory of Britain. A penetrating illustration of the widespread significance of these two differing types of formulation is articulated in modern British politics, between nationalist and loyalist politicians in Northern Ireland: the one party holds that all born within the territory of Ireland are 'Irish'; the other party holds that the territory of Britain extends to wheresoever the 'English' live. In subsequent theoretical writing in political anthropology, Fortes and Evans-Pritchard made the well-known and parallel distinction between states as acephalous kin groups, and states as centralised polities (Fortes and Evans-Pritchard 1940). Political historians follow a similar argument in the debate on the historical primacy of nation or state, that is whether modern states reflect the model of the 'state-nation' or that of the 'nation-state'.⁶ Here I follow the modern work of Benedict Anderson in giving historical fact through the colonial experience to the 'state-nation', and ideological primacy in a modern state to the myth of the 'nation-state', projected back into the past (Anderson 1983). Whether considered at a national or local level the logic here is the

⁵ In Europe in the twentieth century, the expression 'Blood and Soil' has been overly-identified with Nazi ideology and the mass 'back to the land' agricultural movement instigated by the National Socialist Party of the 1930s in Germany. See Bramwell 1985.

⁶ On the difference between these views of the primacy of 'nation' or 'state', and their respective association with German and French historians, see the resumé of Meinecke given in Snyder 1968:58.

same: arguments on the historical primacy of principles of kin or territorial factors in specifying ethnic identity, and on the historical primacy of nation in producing state or of state for producing a nation, follow the same logical form. The area occupied by people originally considered 'the same' in blood may define the territory; or control of the territory may prescribe who will be thought of as 'the same' in blood.

Yet the one underlying feature even today distinguishes the Himalayan region from others in South Asia and elsewhere. This is the topography with its localised extremes of altitude and problems of communication and transport which in turn support great biological, as well as cultural and social, diversity. This topography still gives economic if not technological limits to the formation of a wider, homogenous identities, both national and regional, and so has helped to maintain the more traditional social integration of difference within localised hierarchies. The larger national identities that exist today do not, then, appear to be homogeneous and exclusive in the manner we may associate with a developed nationalism in the West. One is not Nepalese in the sense that one is French. Like the state borders to the plains in the south of the Himalaya, nations have been only half-formed out of local community and empire, and the modern Himalayan citizen often can appear more as an individual than as the representative of a nation. In having avoided the European model of the nation-state, a Nepalese at the same time may be both traditional and post-modern.

The Traditional State

Up until the late eighteenth century the polities that covered the land of present-day Nepal were referred to as the 'twenty-four' and 'eighteen' kingdoms. Each such small principality covered a territory approximately twice the size of the present-day districts of Nepal; further to the west, the small kingdoms of the north-west Himalaya such as Ladakh, Balte (or Baltistan), Hunza and Kabul were essentially similar, as were those to the east of Sikkim or that made up modern Bhutan. The overall political system was constituted by the interacting set of such parallel, local, political units.

Typically, these would have their centres at northern hill or southern valley locations, points critical for control of north-south trade across the Himalaya. Their authority was associated with these urban foci, which prototypically were also cultural centres, with vertical linkages at once

political, economic and religious: as blessing and legitimacy radiated out and downwards, so goods and statements of fealty flowed inwards and upwards. Materially, they were supported by their control over the local agrarian surplus and inter-regional trade.

Beyond these local political units there were fluctuating wider political alliances. These could be expressed in marriage, war, and in common dedication and offering to the same religious shrines, but at a popular level there was an absence of any general, wider, solidary political sentiment. Instead of the modern notion of a homogenous nation there was instead the idea of a multitude of different 'kinds' (*jāt*),⁷ related by degrees of sameness and difference, rather like the European medieval religious model of the 'Great Chain of Being' (Lovejoy 1936). In practice, intermarriage between similar peoples across the Himalayan chain was one form of wider integration. These groups would have an analogous positions in their local political structures and both gross cultural similarities. Conceptually, this exchange required a recognition of sharing, or of unity of basic substance. Here, notions of shared 'blood' are supplemented by those of 'air' and 'water', and so from the idea of a local regional 'climate' or territory, as together constituting a local fact to which a person has to adapt.⁸ Traditionally, adaptation would be religious, consisting of offering during and repurification on return from pilgrimage, and dedication to local kin and territorial deities on taking up new residence. These local forms were often subsumed within values expressed in the Great Religions of Hinduism and Buddhism in codified form, commonality here being a basis for wider exchange and communication beyond the local limits of political influence of any principality.

In this pre-colonial period the history of Himalayan polities can be depicted as the fluctuating political fortunes of noble families at court imposed on top of a local economy that, like the wider religions, was fixed. The continuity was taken for granted as a normal fact as elsewhere in the pre-industrial world. The political cycle was one of external conquest and unification, followed in subsequent generations by internal conflict, fission,

⁷ *Jāt* can be translated as 'species', but also has a looser non-technical use as 'type' or 'kind' in everyday speech in Nepal.

⁸ *Hāvāpānī* today sometimes is glossed as environment, but it conveys 'climate' in the literal sense of 'air and water'; 'earth' and 'fire' would also be expected to underlie basic human identity in terms of an Ayurvedic specification of elements; there are also other Tibetan and Hindu models of bodily substance.

disintegration, and flight and exile by the vanquished; later there might again be conquest and unification, possibly from an adjacent, regional, political centre from where the vanquished and usurped party returned.⁹ And so fortunes would rise and fall along the lines of conflict between noble families. The mythology of the Himalaya contains many such examples, often depicted as conflict between 'sons' as rightful rulers and 'wicked uncles' as usurping regents of the land. As well as a sign of the perceived importance of the dynastic conflicts, these stories also indicate the central place of kinship, that is in the terms used here of 'blood', as the key popular conceptual idiom for social solidarity and identity.

What we know today as the Kathmandu Valley of Nepal contains three such minor polities or royal cities; occasionally and most latterly under Kathmandu, these were united into one kingdom. In these royal cities the body of the king symbolically acted itself to purify and integrate the kingdom, acted quite literally as the 'kingpin' to the state. This was illustrated in ritual, and in annual ceremonies at temples in each of the four quadrants of the 'Nepal Valley' by the King.¹⁰ More recently this ceremonial integration was illustrated in the Coronation of 1974, at which the King was anointed with basic organic substances representing the different types of people of his realm.¹¹ The person of the 'God-King' and the city was identified with such politico-religious authority, the land and the people.¹² The closer to the sacred centre, the higher up the hierarchy, the greater the religious purity and

⁹ This cycle has been termed 'fission' and 'fusion' (e.g. Dupree 1973); however, 'fission' can indicate either collapse or expansion, depending on political dominance and migration. An analogous set of models of political historical cycles for the peoples of the northern Gangetic plain is given in Fox 1971.

¹⁰ In the case of Mongolia this court with all its symbolic connotation as a sacred axis was fully mobile, and followed an annual nomadic pattern.

¹¹ On the architectural and iconographic representation of the symbolism of the four quadrants in the Nepal Valley see Slusser 1982; Hamilton 1819:192; Toffin 1986.

¹² The *axis mundi* model also corresponds to other cultural complexes, including the model of the *devarāja* propounded by Coedès (1947) for the 'Hindu-Buddhist' kingpins of South-east Asia. Clearly it is a suitable cultural vehicle for any high culture with 'tantric' or 'shamanic' linkages, associated with this Himalayan area which would equate self, divinity and kingdom in ceremony. This notion of the 'god-king' as *axis mundi* has subsequently become referred to as the 'Theatre State' or the 'exemplary centre' in South-east Asian literature (see Geertz 1980).

material benefits. Some such centres were more important than others, but even the Islamic west of the region was not without this regal courtly manipulation of space in which time spent in the proximity of the ruler was itself viewed as a blessing.¹³

At least in its secular expression this account has many of the traits of a pre-industrial Europe, that is of the myriad of principalities under the Holy Roman Empire and the 'City State' which consisted of isolated urban foci of civilisation and order set at key locations in a more rustic, agrarian fabric. Their political authority, too, sometimes extended more in principle than in practice.¹⁴ The more recent western notion of the state as an exclusive sovereign and dominion body, with control of a fixed, absolute, territory, as powerful in the periphery as the centre, did not form part of this model.

North of the Nepal Valley there were few political spaces demarcated unambiguously as bounded spatial units, and many areas without land-titles.¹⁵ In the highland Himalayan region of Tibetan culture due north of the Nepal Valley, the early land-titles are from the Nepal Valley, dating from the early eighteenth century onwards;¹⁶ these appear to imply that this location, well within the current northern border of Nepal, is immediately 'south of the Lama's land'. The reverse was also true, and kingdoms, lords and priests at various political levels in Nepal had authority over various shrines and their associated fiefs further abroad, such as the Kyirong area in Tibet (Schuh 1988), as they did over Nepalese shrines and temples at Benares in India.

¹³ This process carries over into modern political activity in South Asia in the institution of *darsan*.

¹⁴ One difference between Europe and Asia was the relative lack of separation between state and church in the Asian as contrasted to the European model (see Dumont 1980:225).

¹⁵ For Nepal Richard Burghart has argued for variously differentiated indigenous notions of territory and political status: he separates the idea of *des* variously as 'polity', 'realm' and 'country', the first linked to revenue and the last to 'nation' (Burghart 1984). A contextual ambiguity, overlap and fluctuation in the sense of terms with a single ideal order behind is more likely than such an early systematic elaboration of a popular secular category.

¹⁶ For a consideration of the history of political authority in the Tibetan-Nepal borderlands based on indigenous orthography, see Clarke 1983; Clarke and Manandhar 1988. Burghart (*op. cit.*) argues a similar point on the basis of those articles.

Sacred locations within the Kathmandu Valley, such as shrines at Swayambhunāth and Bodnāth, could be under the authority of people of Tibetan culture who, whatever their authority from the courts in Nepal, were also dependents of monasteries in central Tibet and who enjoyed that wider religious authority and material protection.

Pilgrimage gives a good example of the operation of this broad political order, which was based on culture rather than exclusive secular rights. As one travelled north from Kathmandu and the Nepal Valley there never was any particular point at which one left a wider country named 'Nepal' to enter another country named 'Tibet'. One crossed the boundaries of the central court, the royal city and the topographical threshold of the Nepal Valley in succession; each would be treated as a conceptually related ritual boundary at which there would be an offering in the same ceremonial form. These same ceremonies would be carried out crossing any such threshold, the top of a mountain pass, a river, and when entering the next, smaller, centre of Nuwakot, where one would also make offerings at the local temple to the local gods. And so pilgrimage and more generally travel would move onwards from one temple and resting-place to another, each of which, if only a cairn or water-spring by a tree, was imbued with the same type of sacredness.

As one cut across local areas with allegiances variously to Kathmandu, Bhaktapur, and Lalitpur (Patan), or even to Shigatse in Tibet, there was none of the *angst* that modern man would associate with rapid border crossings or a 'no-man's-land'. In travelling a path northwards across the Himalaya from India to Tibet safety relied on a common cultural vision of order, one that included respect for the sacred, not immediately on secular authority.¹⁷ Secular authority was based on inheritance of sites and the relative status and lineage of those who encountered each other. Overall integration was symbolic and idealised, that is to say viewed as a sacred or religious hierarchy imposed with the mind's eye on fluctuating empirical manifestations.¹⁸ One

¹⁷ Even today pilgrims cross state boundaries from Nepal to India (and at times still from Tibet) undisturbed, without state documentation. For Islamic people, especially those from the Near and Middle East, the status of being on pilgrimage to Mecca also can represent a religious and cultural unity above secular politics and nation.

¹⁸ This reflects the mandala model and the model of the 'exemplary centre' introduced above. At least in indigenous conception (as in tantra) there is an

made offerings to local gods and paid respect to local authority, these being local manifestations of the greater, cultural order, idealised in religious form. Ceremonial precedence and rank as perceived through shared cultural conventions, rather than a particular political chain of command, tended to define authority. Politics was encompassed by the social of which it was seen as a particular manifestation.¹⁹

To a traditional world-view, the modern notion of national or state-wide territorial exclusivity in all aspects of legitimate authority would appear as profoundly odd and 'other'. Varying conceptions can persist locally today, and here the term 'impression management' has been used to characterise transHimalayan traders of border regions of west Nepal. They appear to try to change their national identity as they move south and north, from one area to another, presenting themselves as Tibetan to Tibetans and as Nepalese to Nepalese people (Fisher 1986; Manzardo 1978). The term suggests that they 'really are', in an absolute sense, either Tibetan (Chinese?) or Nepalese nationals: in point of fact a full assimilation as modern nationals of Nepal seems not to have occurred.²⁰ In the case of these poor traders in salt, wool and grain, it is not so much a modern entrepreneurial development in which they consciously manipulate cultural tools to present themselves to advantage, as in a 'transactionalism' of the west, but a cultural residue of a pre-modern world view in the Himalaya. There are modern examples of linkage of loyalty to more than one state which we will discuss presently.

In a traditional, Asian state, the focus was not on peripheral borders but on the pomp, ceremony and the sacred architecture of the symbolic centre. Remoter places, which for some implied the entire Himalaya and the 'north-west frontier' or 'tribal' areas, were naturally associated with disorder,

idealist basis to this idea which does not necessarily stand or fall as a model on the empirical existence of only one historical *axis mundi*.

¹⁹ The notion of encompassment presented here, necessarily briefly, comes from Durkheimian sociology and the notion of traditional or rather 'primitive' classification, as developed by Louis Dumont (1986:227). See also Clarke 1985:202.

²⁰ The trans-Himalayan regions of Manang, Mustang, Dolpo, Mugu and the reaches of the upper Arun would be areas which in modern times thought of themselves as separate from the rest of Nepal.

wildness, and powers of nature and tribes.²¹ Even around urban locations state power did not imply an exclusivity of authority; there was rather a loose interpenetration of control over territories, held by princedoms or churches in various states of alliances, a secular and hence imperfect order that fluctuated according to political fortune.²² Especially in these peripheries, authority changed and overlapped, and to come under the authority of more than one lord was a normal fact of political life.²³ Local areas could have double or no secular status in wider political systems, at times could play one lord off against the other and *de facto* would act independently.²⁴

Such freedom mirrors the attempted actions of the Himalayan states themselves, squeezed between the imperial might of Britain and China. It also reflects the phenomenon of extremely localised territorial power in the Himalaya, which has limited the spread of modern nationalist movements, both of which are points we will return to below. Historically, it was precisely this point of responsibility for the actions of those at such junctures on the map on which the colonial and traditional model of the activity of the state differed. Frontier disturbance over presumed 'borders' was to provide the immediate justification for the Raj's invasion towards the Nepal Valley, as for the invasion to the Court of Pagan in lowland Burma.

21 See Douglas 1966 for a general analysis of this theme of symbolic power and boundary areas.

22 This interpenetration of territory in some ways appears similar to that held under the notion of the 'extra-territoriality' enjoyed by Western powers in some coastal parts of China in the nineteenth century, a concept that also raises a contradiction to the idea of state sovereignty.

23 In the northern Gangetic plain, such ambiguity between the authority of the Nepal Valley and the British Raj resulted in villages being subject to double taxation (Stiller 1976). By contrast, in the mountain highlands isolation was such that these peripheral areas often were taxed by no one. See Clarke and Manandhar (*op. cit.*).

24 The demarcation of northern borders between the British Raj and China in the 'McMahon Line' of 1914 was not ratified by the Chinese Court. The implications continue today for the territory of the north-eastern Himalaya where there is an overlapping sovereignty between China (Medog and Zayog Counties), Burma (Northern Hills) and India (Arunachal Pradesh).

The Colonial Encounter

Although Nepal in common with many other parts of the Himalayan region was never directly colonised, from the eighteenth century onwards the political history of all states in the Himalayan region is a product of a colonial encounter. From within the Nepal Valley that early imperial contact, whether to British India or to China, was at first viewed much as a continuation of normal factional intrigue: that is, it was presumed to be with a protagonist of roughly the same scale and broadly similar in ways, but with slightly differing cultural traits and with a competing interest. The British monarchy like the Nepalese was presumed to symbolise divinity: for example, Queen Victoria could be regarded as a 'White Tara', a Buddhist Himalayan tantric aspect of Shiva. In this equation conflict was seen as a temporary stage of a cyclic process, a passing point that would be accommodated to and recast through the dynastic welter of Himalayan court politics. For example, there were enquiries from Nepal (as there were at this period from elsewhere in princely India) whether the monarch of England would give, or take, a daughter in marriage as a sign of political alliance. This was a mistaken assessment of the nature of the British state and presence in India.

From the turn of the nineteenth century onwards, the history of contact by the Empires of Manchu China and British India was itself to lead to a change in conception of the state within the region. From the late seventeenth century onwards the Manchu Kingdom had been expanding its authority westwards, and by 1720 had reached Tibet and Lhasa; the British Raj had been expanding westwards from Bengal across the Gangetic plain of India at the same time. These imperial movements began to fix the borders of the Himalayan states, and as the actual power of Manchu China began to wane with its own troubles later in the nineteenth Century, the idea of Russian expansion south-eastwards, the idea of the 'Great Game' between Britain and Russia on the north-west Frontier and in Tibet, became a further stimulus for a clear definition of authority in this area.

Behind the intrigue and interests of many, two aspects of Britain's strategy thread their way through the history of the north-west frontier. One was the need for security on India's borders, the other to ensure not being dragged into a global confrontation with another empire by chance contact on the remote frontier. Britain's action here had regional political effects. First, it halted processes of expansion from within the region which if left unchecked might have turned a local state into a competing Empire. Second, it tended to

fix territorially smaller states within the region as lesser order constructs, the 'Princely States' and 'Himalayan Kingdoms'. The Sikh Court of the Punjab was one such expanding and competing state that was destroyed; the Gorkha Kingdom was similarly involved in expansion out from the Nepal Valley, but was more peripheral and was constrained into a territorial form.

The conquest of the three royal cities of the Nepal Valley around 1769 by the House of Gorkha is often regarded as a key feature of the establishment of modern Nepal. Some modern accounts then stress from that date onwards a process of 'unification' within the territory of Nepal as it exists today, as if a modern territorial Nepal had always existed as such in some natural state awaiting discovery. Though there were some innovations in the Gorkha manner of rule, it is mainly the timing of their presence in relation to Britain in India that gave permanence to their state. More correctly, the period that follows on from 1769 is one of a wider process of territorial expansion, a local Empire in the making outwards east and west along the Himalaya from the new-found centre of the Nepal Valley. The colonial encounter both brought this expansion to a halt, and held static what it left.

The expansion of the House of Gorkha had reached its zenith in 1789, at which time it stretched along the Himalayan chain from present day Garhwal (that is almost from Kashmir) in the west, across to Sikkim in the east. It even temporarily took in Shelkar (Tingri) from Shigatse, that is an area on the high plains way to the *north* of the Himalayan chain. Shigatse, a town on the main Tsangpo river of central Tibet, also was such a local kingdom, with alliances and rights in Kathmandu as well as Lhasa.²⁵ This possibility of further expansion northwards towards Shigatse on the Tibet plateau was stopped by China's military support of Tibet. In 1791, a Chinese army passed from Tibet southwards through the Himalaya along the Trisuli river-valley towards the seat of the Kingdom of Gorkha at Kathmandu. For a number of months in 1792 they stayed within half a day's march of the Nepal Valley. Their military success resulted in tribute through traditional bi-annual missions from the Kathmandu Court to the Manchu Court of Beijing, but this victory had no permanent territorial implications. Possibly it was a traditional incursion, or possibly the power of the Manchu Empire was already on the wane. Much of the Nepal Valley Kingdoms' authority northwards to the

²⁵ One main structural difference between Shigatse and Ladakh and the normal kingdoms of the Himalaya was that succession was directed by religious principles of succession, as well as by descent (Clarke 1983a).

Himalaya was re-established after the subsequent Nepal-Tibet war of 1855-6.²⁶

After the second war landholders who earlier had helped Shigatse and Lhasa, that is who had been disloyal to the House of Gorkha, had their land-titles confiscated by Kathmandu, even those dedicated to religious deities. For example, the land-grant of a noble Lhasa lineage (Lha-lung) to the north of Kathmandu was resumed and then reconfirmed (along with a grant of land close to the Court in the Nepal Valley) to a Chinese Envoy who arrived after that War in 1856.²⁷ Presumably this was with an eye to trying to establish the latter's loyalty, and in this case the tactic of establishing allegiance through alliance in marriage and then blood to the House of Gorkha succeeded.²⁸ The general point is that any perceived difference in nationality was not salient in these changes: there was still no sense of 'Nepalese' versus 'Tibetan' or 'Chinese' in a general sense of primary, wider, nationality, only of kinship and a more contingent political allegiance within a wider cultural milieu.

The British Raj was closer to hand than China and in material terms increasingly powerful: from that time onwards secular facts of military and material power became of increasing importance in South Asia. The Raj cut back the expansion of the House of Gorkha to the west and east along the Himalayan chain, and to the Gangetic plain in the south, through various military engagements in the Nepal-Britain War of 1814-1816.²⁹ At its end some two-thirds of the territory of the House of Gorkha remained from its peak, now clearly bounded and isolated east, west and south by directly controlled British territory.

²⁶ The border finally established between China through Tibet and Nepal as states follows roughly the areas of influence established militarily in 1856. This was only fixed on the ground and ratified by a Nepal-China Boundary Commission in the 1950s.

²⁷ Nepalese language sources as listed in Helambu Documents (Clarke 1980).

²⁸ His grandson, the infamous Chinese or 'Cini Lama' of Kathmandu of the 1960s, was educated in Benares by a Scottish nanny shortly after the First World War. He had over fifty grandchildren through Nepalese wives.

²⁹ In the south, Britain later returned the western plains area which was a grain-basket for the Court of Nepal, in return for the military assistance of the House of Gorkha during the 'Indian Mutiny' of 1857.

Britain's policy fixed the territorial integrity of Nepal and so promoted the power of the existing local rulers. The cycle of dynastic growth, fission, and conquest from the outside, which in the normal course of events could have been expected to have split the House and Kingdom of Gorkha within a few generations, was halted. Hence political units, the integrity of which formerly had been based on the coherence and continuity of elite families, now became maintained behind fixed borders, and the basis of the political structure of the state began to shift from kinship to the western, spatial model, that is in the terms presented here from 'blood' to 'territory'.³⁰

There are other historical examples of such colonially driven change in the Himalaya on the northern and north-west frontier of British India from the nineteenth century onwards. Indirect control over Kashmir as a princely state was to lead to the extension of that territory. This first was northwards, through Johnson's expedition from Ladakh along the route to central Asia to Chinese controlled Turkestan which produced a map with political borders that still is significant in the modern Sino-Indian boundary dispute in the north-western Himalaya.³¹ This second was north-westwards, beyond the Indus at Bunji which was the actual limit to the Valley of Kashmir's normal authority, to take in Chilas, Yasin, and above all Gilgit to control the pass through Hunza north-westwards to central Asia. In this way Britain, at first indirectly, acquired control over access to the Pamir where Chinese influence was contracting and Russian expanding. This expansion became part of the 'Great Game' between Britain and Russia, with intrigue between local rulers and representatives of the Russian and British Empires over the wide arc from Herat (in present-day western Afghanistan), northwards and east to Khotan (in present-day Xinjiang). On the Pamir north of Hunza in 1889 these clashes brought Gorkha soldiers in the service of the Indian Army face to face with Cossacks under the command of the Imperial Russian Army, as recorded in a photograph of the encounter in which their two commanding officers, Younghusband and Grombtchevsky, pose for a group photograph at the front

³⁰ In the case of Nepal this transition is said to have occurred during the rule of Bhimsen Thapa, who spent a number of years living in the Raj at Benares and is credited as being the first ruler of Nepal with an understanding of the British fixed territorial model (Stiller 1976:220ff.).

³¹ On the Johnson map that resulted from the expedition of 1865 see Lamb 1973:113.

of their troops, like two sports teams before the 'off'.³² Britain later established firmer military control over the critical north-western Hunza route, but also followed through on the policy for the maintenance of a nominally neutral but well-disposed buffer in the frontier region,³³ and came to an understanding with Russia over borders.³⁴

In the north-west, Russia kept the Pamir and Britain kept Hunza; further to the west, Britain maintained its lines of communications and a resident in Kabul, and the Russian limits of influence were located a decent distance away, not far beyond the south-eastern railhead from Russia west of Herat.³⁵ In the space in between, which included a thin corridor around the northern edge of Hunza, the state of 'Afghanistan' was interposed as a buffer between these two Empires. The spatial borders on the 'north-west frontier' had become important when they became an issue for the British and Russian Empires, and the authority of a kin-based court was buttressed by an imperial power over a territory it had delimited.

In these nineteenth century imperial moves in the north-west Himalaya, as with Nepal, the Raj pencilled in the boundaries of future Himalayan states, and so set the ground for future debates on ethnic identity and for state-wide processes of nationalism. The Kabul Court attempted to extend and consolidate its influence over the various peoples under its new-found authority.³⁶ It subsumed the power of Herat and the whole swathe of land to the north-east, the Hindu Kush and Wakhan Corridor, and in so doing ensured that the Russian and British Empires did not come into direct contact.³⁷

32 The considerably shorter Younghusband stood on a box, so that the standing of the British Empire should not be diminished.

33 The Simla Convention of 1839 under Lord Auckland is normally regarded as the beginning of this policy which focused on the Court of Kabul.

34 Normally referred to as the 1893 Durand Line and the 1895 Anglo-Russian Pamirs agreement, an account of which is given in Lamb 1991.

35 The Durand Convention of 1893, also known as the Kabul Convention, established most of the frontiers of Afghanistan.

36 On this history see Leitner 1896; Dupree 1973; Schuyler-Jones 1974.

37 This includes the narrow Wakhan corridor north of Hunza occupied by small group of formerly Kirghiz nomads, who after incorporation in the twentieth century were cut off from their other grazing lands, and others of their culture, to their north in the then Soviet Union.

Up until the turn of the twentieth century the name Afghanistan was not generally used for any part of this area: in the north, the areas, if referred to generally at all were called Russian or Chinese Turkestan; further to the west there was a 'Zabulistan' that focused on Herat; the principality that lay between the Hindu Kush and the Indus, centred on the city and valley of Kabul, was usually referred to as 'Kabulistan'. Up until 1880, the term Afghan was used mainly as a collective name for the various tribal, that is kin-based, groups in that Kabul area. Political authority, as in the case of the discussion of Nepal, focused on the urban centre and the authority of the ruling dynasty at court, and it was allegiance and factionalism in terms of kin and blood rather than spatial boundaries in terms of territory, that were the important social factors. Political agents such as Biddulph in Gilgit well understood the focus on kinship implicit in the politic use of the term 'tribe'.³⁸

The close presence of and developing links to the institutions of British Empire allowed new conceptions to be communicated to elites through a number of cultural strands. Britain put the technology of the age in place, first as a telegraph from Rawalpindi to Gilgit; this communication progressed to a point where in the Hunza of the late 1930s the Anglophile Mir was a figure dressed in sports jacket and trilby, who kept an English diary, and who daily overiewed his kingdom by calling up and down the line by telephone.

There was one strong transfer which may now appear as defunct in the face of Western economic individualism and egalitarianism, that is the communication of the wider idea of empire itself. This is empire not as a temporary wider alliance of blood but as control over a fixed territorial whole, a spatial hierarchy in which each statelet has its fixed and exclusive region or space, laid out on a map next to others within the wider imperial territory. This model further differs from the Asian model of hierarchy in that it is not in principle tied to religious revelation, but to empirical discovery and reason.

Knowledge of these territories and peoples had until that time come mainly from classical Greek sources, elaborated by myth and travellers' tale. These now could be interpreted by the discoveries of western science and scholarship, based on the direct contact of explorers and envoys with the peoples and locality. In practice there were flaws in this logic which derived not so much from discovery as a scientific revelation. Theory was tied to historical

³⁸ For example, Biddulph 1880. These peoples were usually organised according to a segmentary kinship model.

speculation, and common form was to be explained by common origin, with all projected back to Ancient Greece and Egypt which were regarded as the fount of all civilization. Links tended to be forged from local peoples back to those mentioned in the texts of Classical Antiquity, and anthropological speculation on the region to the north of the Gangetic plain moved in endless circular speculation of who a people *really were* in origin and race, with the idea that it was from such prototypes, at least in fallen form, that they were to be primarily understood at the time (see Clarke 1977).

Particular common items and parallels were noted; but though this literature contains excellent accounts of particular ceremonies and events, these are not accounts of people in the round. In the age of discovery reference to variety fitted well. Yet, despite the evolutionary dressing of the language of race this was not a natural history, that is an application of the comparative method to a knowledge of the region. Systematic comparative analyses of Himalayan social and cultural variation comparable to those made for natural species were simply not a possibility at that time. The empirical complexity of society and culture in the Himalaya is such that much basic linguistic and textual work needed first to be carried out, before abstractions could sensibly be pursued. The typologies of peoples and frameworks of social change and evolution applied at the time were monolithic, classic-bound, and forced in application, and did not result in any systematic gains in knowledge.

The accounts of natural resources and economic products continued, as they had in the earlier period of contact through the East India Company when they had been justified by advantage in trade; writings of the late nineteenth century gave a shift in perspective away from commercial inventories to pseudo-scientific accounts of peoples from the viewpoint of a civilising mission, of the needs of government, of the correctness of imperial order. These accounts had a direct effect as the work was not carried out solely by and for academics, but largely by scholars who were also administrators and political agents of Empire. Hence these accounts of peoples and lands were fed back into the government of these newly-created territorial states. They acted as a 'self-fulfilling prophecies' and in cases came to prescribe the very definition and naming of the peoples of the area.³⁹

³⁹ This term 'self-fulfilling prophecy' derives from the work of Daniel Joseph Boorstin.

From the first half of the nineteenth century onwards the pages of *The Journal of the Asiatic Society of Bengal* contain articles which give structured lists of names for presumed peoples of north-western Himalaya and Karakoram, and also for the north-eastern Himalaya and Nepal. There is a recognition of local fluctuation or 'corruption' of ethnonyms in translation and usage, and some note that the same name is used by different groups, and that the same local group can use more than one name; yet in peoples so being presented as representatives of underlying taxonomies, these articles imply that they have known historical and scientific links to other such peoples in those orders. The literature became directed towards discovering and so to promoting a fixed, substantive, classification. Such hierarchic classifications of territorial segments came to replace the earlier, more localised and fluid formations of 'kind'. The copious late-nineteenth century Gazetteers of the northern regions of India, such as Sikkim and Kashmir, illustrate this typologising tendency, that is they try to place peoples as 'tribes' and 'castes' with an absolute and fixed position in various regionally defined territorial segments, a spatial expression of an ideal pyramidal hierarchy that leads back to the centre.⁴⁰ Such accounts helped redirect and legitimate the political future of the region and its peoples, as a people's status no longer depended on local factors of fortune, interpretation and power, but on a more static and centrally prescribed ascription by an imperial expertise.

The discovered 'types' of people could be thought of as 'ideal types' that stood behind the empirical order. In these terms, what was observed on the ground was not so much a naturally occurring variation as a 'mixture' of sub-types, imperfect exemplars of supposed underlying ideal racial types and evolutionary stages. In this logic, the 'Balti' and the 'Ladakhi' could be thought of as a mix made up from various proportions of more basic 'Dardic' and 'Tibetan' elements, which themselves were thought of as particular manifestations of the more ideal 'Aryan' and 'Tartar, or 'Turanian' (Mongoloid) forms (Clarke 1977). Hence a pseudo-scholarship created taxonomic analogies to family, genera, and species, in which the ethnic labels followed the names of the new local territories that had been bounded and named by the colonial encounter. In this the new territorial states would be peopled by a 'nation' made up of various 'tribes' with further subordinate 'tribal divisions'. Groups were recognised in terms of the gross physical characteristics of physical appearance and language, even dress. Yet away from gross differences such as

⁴⁰ See Atkinson 1882-1886; Bates 1873. A number of these Gazetteers have now begun to be reprinted today in India.

between the Indo-Aryan, Tibeto-Burman and Burushaski groups for language, spoken language and physical appearance were rarely discontinuous. In practice, the name of the territorial area and the presumed racial identity as one people often was taken as definitional of the language, and the name of the territorial area and presumption of a common language as presumption of ethnic unity, in a circular logic justifying peoples in terms of language groups and *vice versa*, and which established the use of newly-promoted territorial labels.

There were various devices and patterns by which such labels were acquired and extended as nations. One progression was for the name of the main town of an area to become applied to the local state, then the language, and then as a 'national' name, the variety being constituted by the various local 'caste' and 'tribal' divisions. For example, up until the mid-nineteenth century in Western writing on the north-western Himalaya the area now known as Baltistan was known generally as 'Little Tibet', and the area now known as Ladakh was known generally as 'Lesser Tibet', 'Greater Tibet' or 'Western Tibet'. It is only subsequently that 'Baltistan' appears in the literature, following on from references to the central town as 'Balte';⁴¹ similarly, the Indian state of 'Ladakh' also follows on from the name of the main urban centre which then was generally given as Lha-dakh rather than Leh. This modern movement contains three linguistic shifts.⁴² First, as the names of the former urban cultural centres 'Balte' and 'Lha-dakh' have moved to cover the territory as a whole so other terms, Skardu and Leh, have come to be applied exclusively to the old capital cities. Second, by naming them in this recast political form as territories without the epithet Tibet, the place and the people have been cut away from Central Asia and Tibet, and been anchored politically in South Asia. Third, through this act of social inclusion by taxonomy there is an ethnogenesis: so extended as territorial labels these terms then become available as higher order ethnonyms for the people within those territories, and general reference to 'The Balti' and 'The Ladakhi' appears.

In the case of Afghanistan there was a broadly related progression, only the original term so-extended was not the name of the capital city, but a generally used and recognised name of the people who lived there. Hence as

⁴¹ This ascription as *sBal-te* is in Tibetan. In Western, and possibly in Islamic sources, the capital town is known as Skardu or Iskardu.

⁴² Similarly, *La-dwags* is the Tibetan name of the capital.

the local state extended from Kabul outwards from 1893 onwards, there came a corresponding casual extension by Western commentators of the term 'Afghani' to cover *all* who had previously been known either by their own local particular name, or who had been known under the more general epithet of 'the north-west frontier tribes'. The ruler of Afghanistan still referred to his land by yet a different and descriptive name, that is as 'Yaghistan' the 'Land of the Unruly'. It was only in this century that 'Afghani' came to be no longer just the name of a dominant tribal people of the Kingdom of Kabul, but was successfully projected as a higher order, national, classification of local peoples or tribes.

There is a more curious example in the north-west frontier region, that is the case of 'Dardistan', a model of kin extended to a state that never was. This term was coined by one inspired Western 'observer' to cover much of the north-western area between Kabul and Kashmir, including Gilgit, Yasin, Chilas and Chitral, and which had no centre. The term 'Dard' itself appears to derive from a Persian root for the word 'fierce', that is a generic type rather than proper name. The would-be creator of that Himalayan state *himself* stated that no such local people recognised it as applying to themselves, and that he used it specifically for the purpose of connecting them to classical antiquity. In so incorporating much of the land in a broad band from Kabul to Kashmir, a putative Dardistan would both have encroached on territory allowed by Britain to both those states, and been constituted by heads too petty and independent to act as a secure buffer between Russian and British interests. Once Britain had decided on the need for more direct control north from Gilgit a 'Dardistan' was an unsuitable vehicle for the policy of the British Raj.

The term fell into disuse, other than that is than by its eccentric inventor in the polemical attacks on his Government through letters to 'The Times' of his dotage.⁴³ The terms 'Dard' and 'Dardic' lacked any wider territorial legitimation, and remained used only in scientific circles to refer to 'tribal' and then to supposed linguistic types of the area. This second act of naming was based on the assumption that the people of the area were, in at least some anthropological sense, to be considered as 'Dards'. It is ironic that the logic of

⁴³ This is Gottlieb Wilhelm Leitner, with his supplement to the *Hunza and Nagyr Handbook* of 1890 entitled *Dardistan*, and the mosque he subsequently constructed in Woking, and more. See Clarke 1977, also as summarised in Keay 1979.

subsequent writing of the 1950s on peoples of this region turned full-circle, grouping people together as 'Dards' and positing an underlying 'Dardic Ethnos', based on these self-same earlier linguistic distinctions (see for example Jettmar 1961).

Nepal corresponds totally neither to one nor the other of these second sets of processes, but in a number of ways represents a kind of halfway-house or variation between the two. It also illustrates how the western encounter can play a penetrating role in cultural processes that have come to define nationalism. The visit of the ruler of Nepal, Jung Bahadur, to England and to France in 1850 is credited as a voyage across the sea to impure lands, a voyage that questioned the absoluteness of the religious ideals of Nepal. The adoption of European military apparel, aristocratic dress and recreations at Court, the stucco palaces of Kathmandu built as conscious echoes of Versailles and Palladian style, communicated a new model at court. Images derived from European secular power stood alongside the ceremonies of the Great Religions to define a new image of state, with ambiguous representations of royalty and power. Their existence implied the end of cultural absolutes, the possibility that change was other than heresy, and gave rise to a questioning if not re-orientation of World View. These symbols of the elites were copied by those intent on upward mobility, and so in turn extended outwards, as in the small-town vernacular for the lesser houses of the Valley and houses of elites in rural Nepal.

There are two names, 'Nepal' and 'Gorkha', both latterly geographical loci, which have come to be used as wider national labels for people within the fixed territory of Nepal. The term 'Gorkha' has been used in two ways: first, as the name for the ruling House of Gorkha, which is now situated at Kathmandu rather than Gorkha and which contains high-caste Hindus; second: as the generic name for martial castes or 'tribes' recruited from within the Kingdom of that ruling House of Gorkha, often spelt as 'Gurkha'. Books that referred to the language spoken in the territory as 'Gorkhali' and the 'martial castes' were fully-developed by the turn of the century.⁴⁴ This double-specification produced the British image of 'Gorkha' both as the proper name of the wider Hindu state, and of the war-like tribes of Nepal.

⁴⁴ Also 'Gurkhali'. See, for example, Meerendonck 1949, which in Lesson Two has such value laden phrases for translation as 'A Gurkha eats rice' and 'The rifle is dirty'.

The general acceptance of the natural military genius of Nepalese or Gorkha tribes of Nepal came through British experience on the field of combat during the British-Nepal war of 1814-16. The recruitment of some individuals from this area of the Himalaya into the Army of the East India Company dates from before that time, and specific, local, 'martial castes' from within the territory of the Kingdom of Gorkha already had been named as such, in the eighteenth century. Lists of these peoples were made by the early official visitors to the area, who were scholars as well as political representatives, and were elaborated by those who followed, both for science and as a practical measure to assist in selection in recruitment (Hamilton 1819; various articles of Hodgson including 1933). It was only later, after the support of the Gorkha State for Britain in the India 'Mutiny' of 1857 and subsequent understandings established by exchanges of letters towards the close of the nineteenth century, that soldiers were more openly recruited by Britain from within the Gorkha state itself, and that the people came to be referred to widely as 'Gorkhas'.

In those documents there were four such main groups of names. In the west of Nepal, the labels Gurung and Magyr (later spelled Magar), and in east Nepal the labels Rai and Limbu, were elevated as the names of the presumed martial tribes, with further named sub-divisions. These two sets of two were singled out from the myriad of varying local names in the middle hills of the region of Nepal under the control of the Kingdom of Gorkha as the 'tribes' with the supposed military qualities recommended to be recruited as 'Gorkhas'. In these cases, as with the colonial experience of East Africa, the higher-order named units of local 'tribes' and the corresponding 'peoples' and 'nations' that were so listed or created within these territories, usually were in scientific terms abstractions at the wrong analytical level.⁴⁵ They were to be distinguished from the higher Hindu priestly and lower untouchable groups, identified mainly with lower-living, valley, populations, and who were seen as not so hardy and less suitable for military recruitment. In general terms, a gross distinction between a tougher 'hill' and more soft-living 'plains' population of the northern Gangetic plain is a useful first criterion for selection for soldiers, as is the avoidance of those whose 'twice-born' Hindu caste position would make for prohibitions in social contact. The analytical error is in elevating a useful tool as a fixed absolute classification, and in taking such a set of ethnonyms as a 'once and for all' indicator of those needed qualities. From that time onwards, these terms take on the nature of a 'self-fulfilling

⁴⁵ This point was first made in 1970 in the seminal article by Southall, 'The illusion of tribe'.

prophecy' as those who wished to be recruited learnt to present themselves in such ethnic terms. Combined with the normal tendency for sons and co-villagers to take on the same professions, this helped give territorial expression to these 'tribes' as collections of local groups.

Such points and the progression has been reported of Magar and other peoples who wished to be recruited to the British army. For example, the Magars of Tichurong are known collectively as Magar because the term is convenient, both for them and for the ethnographer.⁴⁶ The term Tamang is occasionally used by Magar, Gurung and Thakali, for themselves in their own language, and Gurung as well as a people in the west of Nepal also can appear as a subdivision of Lama or Tamang, in East Nepal. Tamang itself was not used as a 'tribal' or ethnic label in the early nineteenth century, and is not recognised as a martial caste in the lists; nor are Sherpa or Lama. People from Sindhu Palchok who in the 1970s would normally present themselves as 'Tamang', 'Lama' and 'Sherpa' in wider society, were then presenting themselves as Gurung, Rai or Limbu for recruitment in the British Army. Of the eastern set, Limbu may be a local corruption of another Tibeto-Burman word;⁴⁷ 'rai' was a term used among non-Hindus in the eastern hills for a headman, and so was a prime candidate as an ethnonym for upwardly-mobile people of that region.⁴⁸ The disparity between the peoples classified together under labels such as Rai, and today Sherpa, Lama or Tamang, outside of a local area, is such that a serious ethnography of the Nepal Himalaya always is prefixed with a highly localised area, e.g. *The Sherpa of Kumbu*, *The Thulung Rai*.

Such state-wide lists with fixed ascriptions of the 'martial castes' and other 'castes' and 'tribals' as used by the British Raj were both a prototype for,

⁴⁶ On this aspect of the Magar of Tichurong see Fisher 1978; see also Hitchcock 1966.

⁴⁷ On the eastern hills of Nepal see, for example, Campbell (undated); see also Levine 1987:74.

⁴⁸ The Nepalese term *rāi*, which is the normal root for the Rai is related to the Sanskrit term for King (*rāja*), and so to 'gentleman' or 'lord'; the adjective *rais* or *rahis* also means noble, and has a sense of chiefly (Turner 1931). In modern times, there have occurred similar processes in Central Northern Nepal, by which the names of occupational elites have become nominal vehicles for ethnicity, in the ethnogenesis of the 'Lama People' from the dominant local group of intermarried 'Tibetan' and 'Tamang'. See Clarke 1980.

and a legitimation of this nascent Himalayan state. This extension of central authority and symbolic value was occurring in other areas: for example, early land-grants in outlying areas for the upkeep of temples were now reconfirmed in written certificates sealed by the Gorkha state, some of which listed re-interpreted festivals for Buddhist and local deities as Hindu and specifically Gorkha, lineage, deities.⁴⁹

A state-wide caste hierarchy was formulated by the House of Gorkha which brought together various local caste hierarchies, including the Tibetans and other 'tribals' of the Tibeto-Burman culture, and hence was given currency as an overall model by the state. This *Legal Code of Nepal* of 1854 was a fixed, prescriptive, taxonomy of the peoples of the territory, and from the viewpoint of the dominant centre now established in Kathmandu, it laid out in principled form who should eat with whom, who should marry whom, who should carry out what occupation, and how groups were to be differently punished. This taxonomy, imposed on top of the pre-existing, local, definitions of relative political status, and the segmented political hierarchies across the country, helped to create the current ethnic map of Nepal (Höfer 1979). As an ideal the hierarchy was seen as a codification of custom, something in itself fixed, timeless, and to be projected back into antiquity.

The purpose of such a hierarchy within the kingdom was not an account of history or social process; it was, as before, the restatement of an ideal or divine order beyond empirical fluctuation, expressed through the institution of the kingship, but now extended beyond the Valley of Kathmandu throughout a fixed and bounded territory. In practice, social relations still were fluid, social climbing was well understood, taken for granted, and commonly used for redefinition, with the upwardly mobile seeking to differentiate themselves in name from their equals and those below, and take on the identity of those above them.⁵⁰

⁴⁹ In the Tibetan Buddhist area of Helambu a local Tibetan Buddhist purification ceremony is textually re-interpreted in state records for Gorakhnāth, the patron saint of the Gorkha lineage, (untitled Tarkhyeghyang entry, Guthi Lagat Records Office, Bhadrakali, Kathmandu, Nepal, Records No 56 and Rakimi Kitab Datta, record No 5/14). Dasai is a key such 'nationalist' Nepalese festival.

⁵⁰ More than the plains of South Asia, Himalayan social history stresses individual and familial than an overall group or 'caste' mobility. See Fürer-Haimendorf 1966. For all its stereotyping of other groups this essay illustrates

The political change of emphasis away from sacred centres to borders was largely in place by the close of the nineteenth century colonial encounter with Britain in the Himalaya. Adoption of new models was to set the stage for a wider integration, that is the extension of a national identity communicated outwards throughout the territory from the old centre. If we apply Maine's example given earlier on Britain and the British to Nepal, we will see the change in perspective. In this case the idea that the local territories listed as the possessions of the House of Gorkha should be recognised as a single entity, that is Nepal (or perhaps more correctly at that point perhaps as a 'Gorkhalistan') started to shift to the idea that those encapsulated within the territory of Nepal, including its rulers the House of Gorkha itself, should be considered as Nepalese.

The use of the terms Nepal and Nepalese also begins to change from being just one way that people who came from the Royal Cities of the 'Nepal Valley' could be identified, to becoming a superordinate national label for the various 'Peoples of Nepal', including those from what now increasingly was known as 'The Kathmandu Valley'. Within Nepal, it was only in the 1930s that the Court themselves began to refer to the country as the 'Kingdom of Nepal', rather than as 'the entire possessions of the King of Gorkha' (Burghart 1984:119).

The above cases indicate a general shift from a political identity through fluctuating local and kinship allegiance, through a wider imperial dynasty, to political identity as fixed, exclusive and based on residence within a wider bounded territory. This shift was brought about in a colonial encounter in which the primacy of territory and political linkage of peoples within such a space was assumed to be the norm, and imposed by the imperial power. In the terms used here, this represents a shift from 'blood' to 'territory'.

This is not a modern national integration as we are familiar with in the west, that is a mythical social contract with equal rights of citizenship for all individuals within the state. It again had much in common with the traditional hierarchy, still a divine order but given fixed form as combined lists of peoples within the new territorial borders of the state. This order may well have been understood by earlier, pre-enlightenment, Kings of Europe, that is

these processes of change quite clearly for this Hindu group; also Levine 1987 gives an excellent account of changes in local identities as a result of overall political features.

as an all-encompassing hierarchy, an attempt to apply a sacred metaphor of integration of ranked difference and complementarity oriented through the Court and Kingship firmly throughout the territory. The intention in so creating such a 'nation' was to promulgate unity and order within all the territory of the Kingdom of Gorkha. The imperial model had become a microcosm of the Nepalese state, an echo created and perpetuated on a model of territorial inclusiveness and common nationhood.

Such colonizing, taxonomic, tendencies and the propensity to erect large, fixed absolute typologies centring on the symbolism of a sacred centre and kingship, may be a general ideological feature of many Asian empires.⁵¹ One sees the same 'Oriental' tendency in the British Empire itself, with its own ceremonial surviving well after the political control and power which it first accurately conveyed had passed its height.⁵² The capital architecture of Empire, as much in New Delhi designed by Lutyens as in the centre of London at the period, and events such as Great Durbar of the Jubilee of 1937, in which tribal rulers from even as far afield as Hunza had their allotted positions, variously distant from the representative of the British throne, indicate just such a symbolic understanding of the integrative use of sacred space and ceremony.

In this wider conception, the extreme local Himalayan social diversity now was encapsulated territorially within a fixed, higher, taxonomic, hierarchy. These were not scholarly abstractions at a distance, but features of elite ideology imposed on local peoples as administrative facts. In this process their own names become logical sub-types to the new, national, identity, imposed from above. These names and lists became political instruments that directed the ethnic and national futures of the region in the manner of a 'self-fulfilling prophecy'.

The general historical argument has been that in earlier traditional Himalayan states local definitions of status, both kin and territorial, were predominant, and that prior to western contact such local politics were played

⁵¹ It may be no coincidence that current Chinese scientific writing possesses precisely this same, taxonomic, tendency. For example, many publications on natural habitat on the Tibetan Plateau focus on naming and typologies using territorial and Sinicised names, rather than descriptions and accounts of process.

⁵² As did that of the Manchu Court in the twentieth century.

out against a more-or-less common and static cultural backdrop of the 'Great Religions' of the region in which against the first order phenomenon was the 'sacred-centre' borders and territories in social terms were second order, fluctuating, entities. At first, the exchange with the British Empire was built on the traditional pattern, and necessarily hierarchical and integrative, in the manner of contact with oriental empires such as that of Manchu China. Though sometimes much of the Himalaya was coloured uniformly red on the map, the circulation of elites was the political norm, and at that time there was little local change through incorporation at the bottom of a new imperial hierarchy. Yet the colonial encounter with the west, in particular the British Raj in India, and to a lesser degree with the Russian Empire, was eventually to result in the imposition of a Western spatial model of statehood with larger state units defined by fixed territorial borders. The countries formed were nascent state-nations, and the central courts they legitimated took on the model of national identity espoused by the colonial power, with a territorial taxonomic model which was communicated down through the metropolis and capitals almost as a self-fulfilling prophecy.

The Post-Colonial State and Modernity

I have suggested a further aspect to the progression from state to nation in the Himalaya, namely the extension of the name of the dominant kin group or of the main urban centre outwards to the newly-fixed boundaries, at first as a name for the entire territory, and then subsequently as a national identity for all peoples within it. Their own names are taken as logical sub-types to the new, superordinate, national, identity. The pendulum having swung fully towards control and inclusion of peoples within the entire territory under Empire, in the modern nation-state it then moves back again to specify a greater homogeneity of nation, of one people, within the state. In the terms used here this is a move from 'territory' back to 'blood' again, but at a different level that sets the stage for a modern nationalism, and also for extreme forms of fundamentalism.

There is more than one irony in the progression here. First, the western ideas that allowed local elites to extend nationalism outwards from their courts to the colonially-defined and secure spatial boundaries of their states, also transmitted the idea of 'other' or 'foreign': this resulted in a triggering of political segmentation and a disintegration of the overall chain of Empire. Second, the very the idea of different descent that had helped integrate local

groups hierarchically in the traditional small-scale society, when taken to an extreme in a modern, egalitarian nation-state becomes a justification for exclusion, and bloodshed.

This modern national unity has developed in various ways. First, it can come from the imposition of a classification of peoples and languages to be considered as local 'tribal' or 'caste' sub-divisions of a newly-discovered nation, erected across the entire territory of the state. This is a first stage of a move away from an imperial order based on difference. Second, following on from this equation longer-term processes of physical assimilation may be set in place through upward individual and family mobility, economic or social plurality, or integration, with attendant intermarriage. Such changes of identity have often been accompanied by rural-urban migration. Third, there is also a more fundamentalist approach to the creation of nation, one which uses physical threats, violence, and massacre to enforce migration or physically exterminate those deemed as different by blood. From reclassification, through intermarriage, to pogrom, all is directed towards producing 'one people', which then can become a nation projected backwards into the past on the territory of the modern state. These processes can be seen to various degrees today in the Himalaya and South Asia. Before 1947 and the end of the British Raj, the most extreme of these forms of nationalism as populist ethnic violence were unknown, though soon they were to arise in India on partition. They are rarer in the Himalaya than in the plains, though now they appear in Kashmir and Bhutan; even here these more fundamentalist forms of nationalist integration are as much state-directed as expressions of popular sentiment. Nepal does not, at least yet, tend to this modern extreme of fundamentalism.

This overall process of separation and consolidation as nation-states continues today within the states of the Himalaya, but it has not taken place equally and fully. Some of the reasons are external and linked to the partition of the sub-continent in 1947-8, which in itself in part was a result of an increased populist nationalism.⁵³ For example, the north-west Himalayan

⁵³ The key features to this external history are the creation of an identity of 'Pakistani' with a Muslim religious identity out of a truncated Imperial India that, despite the size of the remaining Muslim population (the third or fourth largest in the world), had a Hindu religious identity. The point was reinforced by the wars between Pakistan and India in 1947-48 and 1965, which for all their causes in terms of the control of territory, also helped to create a sense of national awareness as being 'Indian' and 'Pakistani', tied to religious

territorial partition, with the conflict and stand-off between Pakistan and India in Kashmir, has resulted in the maintenance of the older, smaller-scale, local names and identities, that is Chilas, Yasin, Hunza, Nagyr, Baltistan and Ladakh. Neither Pakistan nor India thought of the 'northern territories' or Kashmir as complete as they stood, and in comparison to other modern Himalayan states the identities at these administrative levels above them are muted.

Other reasons are internal, particular features of the Himalayan states that ultimately derive from topography. Even the first stage outlined above, that is the notion that people within the state are in some sense 'the same nation' applies only in part and unevenly, as would be expected given the 'patchwork' heterogeneity of the Himalaya. Some illustrations have already been given, such as the current usage by some people of the term 'Nepal' to refer still only to the central Kathmandu Valley, and the fluctuating identity of 'impression management' in the remoter border regions. A similar illustration of the weakness of identification with the state comes from a broad-based development project that was carried out with assistance from a foreign state in a rural mountainous area, in the mid 1970s. When asked about the project, villagers volunteered the information that they far preferred being under the authority of that foreign government to Nepal; they had no feeling of any contradiction in terms of sovereignty, or necessary loyalty to Nepal and a Nepalese identity (Clarke 1983). There are many other examples of the absence of a highly developed idea of state allegiance from the ready ease with which Nepalese enter into long-term contract and loyal service with people from beyond their state borders: there is the 'Gorkha' soldier in the service of Britain, Brunei, India, or Singapore; the 'Sherpa' mountain guide as a member of a foreign expedition; the administrator or expert in the service of international organisations in the capital (or in large numbers elsewhere in the world). In all these examples there is little to signal that one party is 'Nepalese' and that the other is 'foreign', and that links of nationality and the state provide a proper superordinate context for consideration of allegiance and loyalty.

affiliation. The modern paraphernalia of the bureaucratic state which each took over from the Raj encapsulated a national statement in a ceremonial form, with India itself taking over the metropolitan fabric of New Delhi itself. In 1971 Pakistan, a state in two halves without territorial integrity, split between the newly-formed Muslim Bangladesh in the East, and the residual Muslim West Pakistan, the latter of which took on the name of the whole as Pakistan.

In a sense, this lack of national allegiance is a modern characteristic, akin to the internationalism of some elite circles in the west, as well as being a traditional, pre-modern, trait. In Nepal the traditional and the newly-modern and highly-individuated world view appear to reinforce each other, with the normally intervening period of nationalism having been altogether missed out. Yet along with linkages of kin, language, culture and political movements across the southern border, much of the traditional former hierarchy, rather than a political segmentation of territory, remains. In the same way that the topography limits full control of the territory, so it limits the full extension of a modern nationalism. A homogenising, cultural, nationalist, integration has had a partial impact within the Nepalese Himalaya.

In its political history Nepal has been able to play-off India against China and maintain international recognition with a certain degree of success, and in so doing has preserved some qualified political autonomy to its south. A cultural contrast of a Nepalese to an Indian identity is an important component of this. A modern state with a broad-based technical specialisation and administrative infrastructure requires a measure of integration for management of a territory. Daily bureaucratic interaction, greater geographic mobility across the territory, the radio, and national political events such as elections, actively extend and superimpose 'Nepalese' down over local identities as an integrative 'national identity' within the territory. The state has tried to encourage cultural uniformities of Nepalese language, education and dress, and encouraged more distinctive hill peoples to relocate on the southern border with India, to mark this boundary.

The modern image of Nepal pursued by the state and the capital also has emphasised relations to the west and the 'exotic'. In the 1960s it was possible to fulfil this by presenting Nepal as the *only* Hindu Kingdom, which in occidental terms contrasted it as an apparently exotic, timeless, and traditional land to a secularising, industrial, India. Given the current resurgence of Hindu fundamentalism as a cultural feature of Indian national identity, this is no longer a viable strategy.

The presence of the world's highest mountain is a major such differentiating feature from India, especially when referred to by the internationally known name (Mt. Everest after the then English Head of the Imperial Map Service), rather than by the existing Sanskritic or Tibetan linguistic ascriptions. It is symbolic of the distinction between the mountains

or 'hills' versus plains, as the general contrast associated with the difference between Nepal and India. Within the region empirically this idea generates problems: it holds true only in relation to the hills of Nepal and the plains of India itself, and not to India as whole which incorporates similar hill peoples, nor to the strip of plains in Nepal which incorporates similar plains people. It also raises the image of a resurgent Gorkha nationalism in contrast to modern India, and is not a practical political image for the modern Nepalese state within the region.

The wider, imperial model, with links of Nepal to the outside and in particular Britain, was and is still preserved after 1947. Many modern functions such as tourism and development assistance pass through the political centre from the West, following on from the older order of hierarchical patronage. Popularly, the disbursement outwards of these benefits is regarded as a gift from above in return for political allegiance (Clarke in press). Traditional imperial linkages, such as history of the 'Gorkha' as the Nepalese 'martial tribes' recruited into the British army, still continue.⁵⁴ The conquest of Everest by a New Zealander and a Nepalese as members of a *British Expedition*, news of which was publicised in Britain alongside that of the Coronation of a new Queen of Britain and the British Empire, was a continued imperial feature in 1951. These more modern linkages have helped shift the wider image of Nepal away from war. The term 'Sherpa' in the Western world has acquired a generic sense of loyal, high-altitude, porter, clearly separate from the warlike Gurkhas; Mt. Everest acts more as a symbolic world-centre, a 'battlefield' against pollution for nature and the environment, than it is a military battlefield.⁵⁵ The penetration of more recent western cultural features also is an important feature to this newly-constructed modern Nepalese identity. Whereas in India the image of cultural 'Englishness' has tended to carry over a solid echo from the 1940s into modern times, that presented in Nepal is more modern and fragmentary, a combination of a hangover of deference to Empire with the individualism of the 1960s. The pilgrimage of Western youth in the 1960's quest to Kathmandu, and more generally of tourism, large in relation

⁵⁴ The name Gorkha still has a generic sense, now written as 'Gurkha', as a Nepalese soldier; but the other meaning as the House of Gorkha, an epithet for the kingdom and the place where the present lineage of kings originated, is now seen largely as a fact of history.

⁵⁵ It is curious that the conflict between India and Pakistan in northern Kashmir has made for a move in the other direction, with the high and remote Sziachen Glacier of the Karakoram as the main military theatre.

to the scale of the capital, raised a new image in the west of Nepal as peaceful, and spiritual, as well as exotic, mountainous and warlike. The positive reception for western youth culture in Kathmandu was in part a result of the desire for recognition in terms of international modernity by an isolated Nepal. There was no necessity in such a cultural equation in an Asian country; for example, in Vietnam the same contemporary popular Western culture had come to stand not for progress, but for neo-colonial subservience to an imperial power.

The English normally spoken in Nepal is not the Indian English of the sub-continent, which is almost its own idiolect, but is closer to modern English. Some of the current elite had to relearn, or rather learn, the Nepalese language after return from an Oxbridge education, and the English language as in India is the technical and an intellectual working language of the higher elite, much as was French in Russia in the nineteenth century.⁵⁶ It is of course here, in the continued historical parallels with the experience of India, that the long-term political contradictions for independence are found.

Language is an important such feature, and differentiation here in the first place consists of the exclusion of Hindi, and the promotion of 'the Nepalese Language' for nationalist integration. At a conference in the capital of Nepal in the 1970s it was possible for Nepalese to refer to all languages spoken within the territory as 'dialects of Nepalese'; this is despite the scientific knowledge that all the northern languages belong to the Tibeto-Burman language family and not the Indo-Aryan grouping to which Nepalese, along with Hindi and Bengali, belongs.⁵⁷ References to the need to study the documents and literate religious tradition of the Tibetan-speaking peoples of northern Nepal were phrased in terms of the need to study the 'Sherpa dialects' of Nepal, rather than as the need to study the Tibetan language. Similarly, to the south, discussion of the close similarity of dialects on the border to Hindi, rather than to Nepali, was until recently marked only by its absence in Nepal. The current attempts to introduce Hindi as an official language and 'dialect of Nepalese' would appear to be primarily a political Trojan Horse. Clearly, such taxonomies have political rather than scientific agendas, directed towards the creation and extension of Nepalese national identity.

⁵⁶ It was thought proper to consult resident Western experts in Hindu ritual on the classical form of the Hindu coronation ceremony of 1974.

⁵⁷ In technical linguistic terms any Indo-Aryan language is closer to English than to a Tibeto-Burman language.

The persistence and extension of the notion of 'being Nepalese' is in turn projected not just forwards into the future, but also back into an imagined community of the past (see Andersen 1993). For example, in the 1960s in Kathmandu the sole national newspaper carried articles, no doubt read tongue in cheek by some educated Nepalese, arguing that since Lumbini, the birthplace of the historical Buddha (Gautama), was located some few miles north of the current southern border of Nepal with India, that Buddha was therefore Nepalese and not Indian. In this modern nationalist conception, Nepal is the land where the Nepalese live and have always lived, and so a 'natural' modern legitimation exists for Nepal's current separateness as a nation-state, rather than leaving Nepal as a contingent state-nation in political relation to India. This reversal of sequence and causality between state and nation moves beyond the fictions of the founding of a modern Nepal in the eighteenth century. The backward projection through time of the Nepalese nation prior to the formation of the Nepalese state frees Nepal from what now is seen as ignoble, a state whose sovereignty depends on colonial historical circumstance.

Such arguments further promote the idea of independence and permanence of Nepal but are not taken into Indian conceptions. One retired civil servant from south of the border commented that Indians see the State of Nepal as a junior member of a family: 'For India Nepal is like a child, a younger brother: you indulge him, and enjoy seeing him grow and become strong; but if he steps out of line too far and becomes a nuisance, then you administer a sharp smack!' The idiom used by this civil servant was one of kinship, of common blood.⁵⁸

To the north-west, in Ladakh, political circumstance and hierarchy has led to the expression of continuity and contrast in a different way. Ladakh is now clearly a part of Indian Kashmir rather than a 'Western Tibet', from which now at a first level there follows a cultural assimilation through schooling and education to the Indian languages and plains circumstance, rather than to the Tibetan language, culture, and conditions of the highland plateau. At the second level, the Tibetan Buddhist population is dominated in terms of wider market and institutional access by the Muslim majority of the

⁵⁸ In classifications of ethnic groups with the People's Republic of China today, the 'minorities' or 'minority nationalities' (*min-zu*) are included as national elements within a higher order state-wide 'family of nations' (*min-zu da-jia-ting*) in which the Han are the senior and Beijing is the paternal focus.

State of Kashmir which now settles into their area. The main line of upward mobility is for young people from Ladakh who renounce their own culture, move to town, and who advance economically within that part of the Indian model that contains western, material, individualistic values. These factors promote an assimilation and orientation with focus back to Delhi (Norberg-Hodge 1992).

In the case of Afghanistan, control over Kabul is now only in part emblematic of control of the whole territory. The tendency among these people, always described as segmentary in the extreme, is for fission, that is to split into the older statelets, one around Kabul and the south-east, one to the north, the other to the west. It is only to the degree that rival groups from within the whole territory compete for control of the centre of Kabul, rather than accept the more smaller, traditional, centres over which they have actual control, that the notion of Afghanistan survives as a wide territorial state.

To the south, on the plains of India, the pendulum may have swung more extremely up to territory in the nineteenth and early twentieth century, and then more recently fully back the other way, towards a blood-based integration, with the rise of extreme fundamentalist movements. In the northern Gangetic plain, in the Indian states of Uttar Pradesh and Bihar each as large as Nepal, there has been a rise of populist imagery in the terminology of 'Blood' rather than 'Territory'. Ideas of 'nation' and 'one people' are now used to express a countervailing, disintegrative, political tendency. The expressions of inter-communal violence, such as have been experienced there or in Sri Lanka, appear as the imperial residue of hierarchy dissolves and the model of 'one nation' extends more fully within their entire territory.

In extreme developments, ethnic and national affiliations no longer serve to integrate into a hierarchy of ranked and complementary difference, but become identified with political conflict between groups that compete for control of economic resources within the same territory. They are visible in fundamentalist expressions of separation and independence, used in wider competitive interaction to lay exclusive claims to the entire territory of the new state. This is carried out in the name of the nation defined by common descent, and not alliance by marriage, economic integration, or common citizenship within a state. Such national movements project their claims as

'one people', the original people of the land, back into a mythological past, and so are underpinned by ideologies of purity of 'blood'.⁵⁹

There are pressures for the adoption of the more exclusive model of national identity in the Himalaya; In Nepal, 'pan-Hindu' or 'pan-Aryan' political movements of the Gangetic plain have local branches in main urban centres. There are nascent 'pan-Mongoloid' fundamentalist movements, with links beyond Nepal and to a degree across the region in highland areas. To the east of Nepal, extending into Sikkim and Bhutan, there also are pressures from those who speak Nepalese for the establishment of a 'Greater Land of Gorkha', using political imagery that plays on the historical empire of Nepal which extended east and west along the Himalaya in the late 18th century until enclosed by British India.⁶⁰

Groups that existed in rural areas largely in balanced, complementary, relations, or in relative isolation from each other, now may compete for economic position and favour in Himalayan cities. However, overall in the Himalaya these divisions have not yet been acted out in terms of the underlying populist conflict, whether urban and rural, whether ethnic or national. In the Himalaya, fundamentalism usually tended to be constrained by the mountain topography itself. In Indian Kashmir, the protest has been of the people against the national order of the state; in Nepal, these forces have been expressed largely in civil protests against a traditional political order that in cities was seen as undemocratic and corrupt: in neither case has there been fundamentalist violence. Bhutan is the exception; but even here violence has been very much the prerogative of the state. Political protest seems to rely on the state rather than represent an unassisted populism, and to a degree be catered for in traditional mountain warfare against the city-state, or modern political protest, rather than fundamentalist movements.

The natural model of change in the Himalaya, whether through warfare or economics, is of highland people descending and taking over the towns of the plains, rather than in any systemic change taking place in the highland

⁵⁹ The world-wide commonness of the possibility of this extreme may reflect a widespread or universal human psychological tendency.

⁶⁰ In the part of the north-west Himalaya that lies between Baltistan and Ladakh, that is close to the ceasefire line between Pakistan and India, there even have been reports of a Dardic 'ethnic' movement among peoples of that frontier.

regions themselves. The twentieth century has seen qualitative changes from markets, roads and new technology in some areas; but these have not yet made a systemic penetration into the mountain valley enclaves of the Himalaya. Rather, economic and demographic growth have resulted in emigration from these highland regions, with growth and change crystallising out in the burgeoning towns of the main valleys, and the narrow plains area of the south. These are the arenas for future competition.

Traditionally, the topographical separation of parallel valley systems, together with the different economic bases at different altitudes of the mountainsides, have acted quite literally as a baffle against the internal territorial spread of any such conflict.⁶¹ The lack of spread of plains fundamentalism into the Himalaya itself depends on the lack of regional integration, that is the topographical constraint on interaction that raises the *local* territory, the valley-system, which has by definition a variegated productive base and ethnicity, over and above wider notions of unity through blood as the basis for identity. Mountains hinder communication, and promote enclaves with their own local identities that cut across the wider 'tribal' or 'caste' divisions of kin that appear to fuel fundamentalist conflict that can develop from a modern, exclusive, form of nationalism. The only wider form of integration is a hierarchy that itself follows the form of the territory, from enclave up through centres to the capital.

Within its own highland territory, the Himalayan chain still continues to act as a barrier to integration by any such overall, nationalist, movements as have been seen in the northern Gangetic plain. Ultimately, this topographically-induced separation in the Himalaya is a constraint that modern technology has not transcended. While migrants from the Himalaya may well fuel fundamentalist conflict in the plains and themselves experience local disturbance, overall the Himalaya themselves may still be a traditional refuge, a half-way house, between the extreme swings of 'Blood' and 'Territory'.

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