



**Review: [Untitled]**

Reviewed Work(s):

*The Magars of Banyan Hill* by John T. Hitchcock  
Gerald D. Berreman

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themes as the Hindu social system; the retardation of economic development; economic development, national planning and public administration; river valley projects—their direct effects; river valley projects (problems of evaluation and social costs); the transition from a bullock to a tractor economy in India (some indirect effects and benefits); Friedrich List's contribution to the theory of economic development; social costs and social benefits and their relevance for public policy and economic planning; and economic planning and freedom.

But the most dominant of all the arguments is the one on the nature of Hindu culture and ethos as regards its other-worldly and this-worldly orientations vis-à-vis planned social change, mainly of the type known as economic planning and development. Kapp argues that it would be wrong to say "that the core of Hindu metaphysics and moral theory sanctions only the persevering dedication of the beggar-saint and the self-sacrificing personality. If this were the case, Indian civilization could hardly have survived." This argument, however, has already been offered by quite a few Indologists in the last half century or so, e.g., Brajendranath Seal, Benoy Kumar Sarkar, A. S. Altekar, Kalidas Nag, K. P. Jayswal, D. R. Bhandarkar, Franklin Edgerton, and Dale Riepe, to mention a few.

And yet, what is new in Kapp is the application of the argument to the explanation of planned social change in contemporary India. He says, "It is one of the apparent paradoxes of Hindu culture that it also has room for, and indeed recognizes as valid, an often relentless pursuit of material values by those groups of society whose inherited occupations and *Dharma* call for such pursuits." In fact, Hindu culture and its institutions have been both a hindrance and an incentive in the rapid and radical social change that has been the object of concerted efforts in present-day India. And in so far as the traditional institutions have proved to be an obstacle in the path of planned social change, they have been adjusted, if not completely altered at times, to suit the needs of the changed circumstances of the times. This has been all the more possible, as Kapp rightly argues, by virtue of the welfare objectives and the spirit of toleration and accommodation of diverse viewpoints that are embedded in Hindu culture.

*The Magars of Banyan Hill.* JOHN T. HITCHCOCK. (Case Studies in Cultural Anthropology.) New York, Chicago, San Francisco, Toronto, London: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1966. xii, 115 pp., glossary, frontispiece map, 6 photographs, recommended reading. \$1.50 (paper).

Reviewed by GERALD D. BERREMAN,  
*University of California, Berkeley*

Because the peoples of Nepal have been little studied by anthropologists, and perhaps especially

because Nepal is the region of confluence of at least four major cultural traditions, almost any account based on intensive field work would be a welcome addition to the ethnographic literature. This book is unusually welcome, for it is an uncommonly well-written, coherent account of one of Nepal's major ethnic groups. It conveys the variety as well as the uniformity of Magar life by describing people, behaviors, and events as well as roles, patterns, and norms. Its deficiencies in detail and depth are inevitable in the brief and by now familiar format of the Holt series of "case studies"; its style and content represent the best of that genre and make it especially useful for the student audience toward which it is aimed.

Magars are among the most populous of the mid-montane Nepalese peoples, those occupying the lower Himalayas between 2,000 and 10,000 feet above sea level throughout most of Nepal. They speak a Tibeto-Burman language as their own, but speak Nepali, an Indo-Aryan language as well; they are predominately Mongoloid in appearance, but are conspicuously mixed with Caucasoid elements; they are heavily influenced by the great traditions of Hinduism and share much of the little traditions of India. Thus, they are less directly associated with the north (Tibet) and east (Southeast Asian hill cultures), from whence they are assumed ultimately to have derived, than are many of the other mid-montane Nepalese who are their relatives. On the other hand, they are of obviously different origins and affinities than the entirely non-Tibeto-Burmans who populate most of the analogous mountain areas to the west in India, and some of whom live among the Magars and now share much with them—the Brahmans, the Rajputs (Thakuris, Chetris, Khasas), etc.

The Magars, together with their less Hinduized and generally more remote relatives, the Gurungs, have been widely known as the "Gurkha" soldiers of the British and Indian armies, but they have been virtually unknown as the peasant farmers and herdsmen they are in their homeland. This is the context in which Hitchcock describes them in this book.

Banyan Hill is a hamlet of two dozen Magar farmsteads, one of a cluster of hamlets including Magars as 32 percent of the population, Brahmans as 40 percent and other non-Magars, such as artisan groups, in smaller proportions. Located near the geographic center of Nepal, at an altitude of less than 4,000 feet, Banyan Hill's residents are sedentary farmers who raise maize, millet, and rice, trade in livestock, and reap the benefits of a tradition of army service by some of their menfolk. Hitchcock introduces the Banyan Hill Magars in the context of their history, their nation, and their relationships with their non-Magar neighbors. He focuses his description of their community and their way of life on religion, social organization, politics, and contemporary change. The description of social organi-

zation—of family, kin, and caste—is supplemented by a novel and useful section on work groups and singing and dancing groups. Students of North Indian kinship will be interested in the Magar preference for marriage to a mother's-brother's-daughter, a practice forbidden among the non-Magars of the region as it is generally in northern India. Contemporary change is described in terms of increased Magar status in the larger society (consequent upon increased income, education, political participation, and outside contacts), and increased monetization and concentration of wealth which carries with it the prospect of the emergence of a heretofore nonexistent group of poverty-stricken landless laborers. Other readers will find other topics of special interest. But the primary interest in this book, for specialist and nonspecialist alike, will derive from the general ethnographic account, which is altogether excellent. The reviewer awaits with anticipation the more extensive volume that is forthcoming from the same author.

*Peoples of Central Asia.* LAWRENCE KRADER. (Indiana University Publications, Uralic and Altaic Series, Volume 26.) Bloomington: Indiana University; The Hague: Mouton & Co., 1966. xvi, 322 pp., 4 appendices, bibliography, index, 2 maps (in pocket at back). \$6.00 (paper). [Second ed. with preface. First ed., 1963.]

*Reviewed by* PAULA G. RUBEK,  
*Barnard College, Columbia University*

The stated purpose of this book—"to survey the traditional cultures of a definite part of the world, one which corresponds to a culture area and the adaptation of these cultures to conditions of life under the Soviet rule"—is a commendable one in light of the fact that specific ethnographic source materials on these cultures are generally not translated from the original Russian, which thereby limits access to them to a few Western anthropologists. The past and current sources used by the author are extensive. As a general introduction to the area, however, the topical coverage is uneven, and the book does not quite fulfill expectations.

Such topics as ecology and demography receive extensive treatment. The chapter on ecology, with its physiographic and climatic description of the area, is particularly useful (although the absence of a physiographic map is regrettable). Demographic trends in the area are also allocated a separate chapter. Extensive statistical tables incorporating a whole range of data—including rural-urban population, age, sex, and district population distributions at several time periods—are included and summarized, and, to some extent, analyzed. In addition, more than half of the chapter on cities is devoted to changes in population in the chief urban centers of the area for the period 1897-1959. At this point, however, one would have wished rather for more synchronic and diachronic data regarding the social organization and the way of life in these cities with

particular reference to nomadic-urban and rural-urban interaction (both of which are alluded to in other sections of the book but are not given any particular attention). And though the extensive appendix contains additional statistical data on economic developments, industrial output, the labor force, and the level of education, more substantive data on these subjects would also have been welcome. Detail on the content of education, the degree of concern with the educational system, and the native literary and cultural traditions as these relate to Soviet attitudes on ethnicity—though somewhat more difficult to elicit from the Russian sources—would have been more valuable than the statistics alone offered by the author.

The chapter on family and society would have benefited from expansion and more specific detail. For example, although the various types of nomadic pastoralism and sedentary agriculture practiced in this area receive good coverage from the ecological point of view in the chapter on ecology and economy, the author has chosen to treat the topic of social organization in terms of a generalized structure for the area as a whole, thereby tending to submerge important variations characteristic of the different ecological adaptations found in the area. Furthermore, the author's generalizations, when footnoted, give the appearance of being based on single cases. For instance, the author discusses the polygamous nature of the family in theory and the fact that, without large accumulations of bride wealth, the possibility is not realized. He then proceeds to footnote this generalization with a source on the Yazagulem. The small section on the effects of Soviet impact on the "traditional" social structural patterns—if enlarged by a consideration of its effects on persistence and change—would have been of greater value.

The author notes that he has discussed only those general theories that have been substantiated by ethnographic data from the area under consideration. However, one could have wished for a more sophisticated and updated approach to the picture of "family and society," in terms, for example, of the concepts of conical clan and segmentary lineage systems or the recent theories propounded by Fried and others concerning the evolution of the state from a stratified clan system rather than of the sometimes naïve statements on kin and descent. While the theoretical concepts of Radloff and Barthold concerning usurpation of power are considered in the light of state formation in the area, a lack of precise writing at times tends to obscure some crucial theoretical problems posed by polity on the steppe: the reconciliation of social stratification as a basis for political power on the one hand, and the unity of consanguineal descent and the concept of bone on the other.

Unclear writing also mars the author's otherwise satisfactory treatment of religious diversity in the area. In this chapter, though, his separate treatment of the religious practices of the nomadic pastoralists