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The Lepchas: Culture and Religion of a Himalayan People 2. by Halfdan Siiger; Jorgen Rischel  
Review by: R. K. Sprigg  
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and, on the whole sketchy, data, Barth describes the geographical and historical background of the Marri, and their pattern of subsistence (herding, agriculture, cash labour, and collecting) in relation to residence forms (sedentary villages and migratory camps). Some data are then presented on the formal tribal system of the Marri with its emphasis upon a hierarchy of leaders, the apex of which is occupied by the sardar, 'the central and unifying leader, who by his existence creates the Marri tribe'. Also discussed is the accommodation of the modern administrator in the traditional political system.

The remaining two-thirds of the book deals with two principal themes—kinship and marriage, and camps. The limitations of data are here overcome by the excellence of Barth's analysis which is seen at its best in the penultimate chapter on the composition of camps. Also revealed and explained are many interesting facets of Marri culture and social structure, such as their attitude towards conjugal life (negative) and extramarital love (positive); the anomalous position of women who are despised as well as prized; the strong patrilineal ideology which brings together agnates and yet is unable to prevent the segmentation and fission of camps; and so forth.

The measure of Barth's devotion to his friend lies in the very great care he has taken to make Pehrson's fieldwork known to the profession; the success he has achieved is therefore richly deserved.

T. N. MADAN

SIIGER, HALFDAN & JØRGEN RISCHER. *The Lepchas: culture and religion of a Himalayan people* 2. (Publ. nat. Mus. Ethnogr. Ser. 11, 2). 153 pp. Copenhagen: Nationalmuseet, 1967. DK 78

Sikkim has become more and more inaccessible to foreign scholars during the last fifteen years, and especially since the Chinese invasion of India; Professor Siiger's thirty-nine Lepcha prayers, invocations, and work songs, most of them collected in Sikkim, have, consequently, a scarcity value over and above their intrinsic interest.

Part 1 of Professor's Siiger's study is expected to appear later this year; the bulk of part 2 is given over to forty texts in the Grüwedel romanisation, together with both word-for-word and situational translations, an abundance of explanatory material, and, for eleven of the longer texts, a phonemic transcription of them as read by one of his informants.

The phonemic transcription is part of Mr Rischel's contribution to the volume. He precedes it with an introductory section in

which he gives a phonetic description of each of his phonemes and a full discussion of the grounds on which the phonemic analysis of his choice is based.

In addition, all Lepcha words and proper nouns in the texts have been listed, with translation and comment.

Professor Siiger pays tribute to those in India, Sikkim, and elsewhere who helped him with his work; but the willing co-operation of others is in fact a tribute to his own patience and good humour, the greatest triumph of which, in my recollection, was his success in persuading a Swiss Roman Catholic priest to interview a Lepcha priestess for him, to record some of her incantations. The interview was conducted in an amicable spirit of professional rivalry.

R. K. SPRIGG

OBEYSEKERE, GANANATH. *Land tenure in village Ceylon: a sociological and historical study*. ix, 320 pp., illus., map, bibliogr. Cambridge: Univ. Press, 1967. £3 10s.

This is an intelligent book which fills a further geographical gap in our knowledge of the diverse systems of land tenure in Ceylon. It is not yet time to generalise about the structural principles underlying Sinhalese still less Ceylonese social systems; more studies are needed, but interesting questions begin to pose themselves.

Obeyesekere deals with nothing but land tenure; religion, kinship, politics, caste, etc. figure only consequently. This is tantalising—for example, p. 149 mentions a hypogamous illegitimate Karabe Goigama child who is adopted by a Goigama and subsequently marries a Goigama. One hopes subsequent publications will deal with inter-caste relations. In the context of land tenure can the speculative market in 'slaves' be also a mechanism for inter-caste mobility—at least over generations? Possession of a 'slave' in a Goigama *gama* being prima facie evidence of being a Goigama.

The discussion of the ineptitude of British legal concepts in face of a quite different system of land tenure recalls analogous misconceptions in Burma and Buganda. A comparative study of such misconceptions might be interesting.

Finally it is worth remarking in such a short review that the book merits longer discussion. As a well written book its extended discussion will be relatively more worthwhile since little time will be lost on the futilities of 'I said this', 'No, I said that' unfortunately still common in anthropological polemic.

To end critically, 'controlling' on p. 167 is misused. In the context this is merely a