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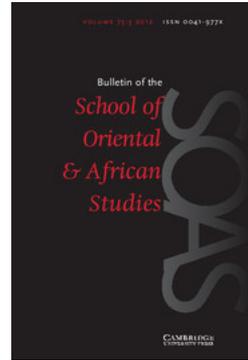
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Pradyumna P. Karan: *Bhutan: a physical and aultural geography*. [vi], 106 pp., 16 plates, map. Lexington, Ky.: University of Kentucky Press, 1967. \$17.50.

R. K. Sprigg

Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies / Volume 32 / Issue 01 / February 1969, pp 231 - 231

DOI: 10.1017/S0041977X00094532, Published online: 24 December 2009

Link to this article: http://journals.cambridge.org/abstract_S0041977X00094532

How to cite this article:

R. K. Sprigg (1969). Review of Pradyumna P. Karan 'Bhutan: a physical and aultural geography' Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies, 32, pp 231-231 doi:10.1017/S0041977X00094532

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behaviour as manifested in the 'average' villager. This enables the author to stress the continuity of the social system, and is in keeping with his adherence to an antiquated view of social change as disruptive of that system. Modernizing currents, especially those external to the village, are deprecated as causes of disharmony. Rising expectations are contemptuously dismissed as 'artificially generated by outside propaganda' and regarded as 'the most insidious factor threatening to undermine the stability of village life'. Indeed, the author appears to doubt the accounts of changes occurring on the subcontinent—on p. 147 he writes of the 'social changes *allegedly* taking place in rural India' (my italics). He finds that traditional institutions in Shivapur have remained basically unaltered and hypothesizes that 'what is typical of Shivapur is typical of village India'. In the process he ignores the considerable literature on Indian villages (there is no bibliography), and this proves to be one of the book's major faults and renders it theoretically uninteresting. On the dust-cover it is claimed that Professor Ishwaran gives a new direction to the study of Indian peasants and their way of life. Unhappily, that direction is anywhere but forward.

LIONEL CAPLAN

PRADYUMNA P. KARAN: *Bhutan: a physical and cultural geography*. [vi], 106 pp., 16 plates, map. Lexington, Ky.: University of Kentucky Press, 1967. \$17.50.

Its title makes this book a companion to Mr. Karan's earlier *Nepal: a cultural and physical geography* (reviewed in *BSOAS*, xxiv, 1, 1961, 156-9). In *Bhutan* he draws on a wide range of descriptions of various aspects of the country written over the last 200 years, to which he adds his own observations as a member of the 1964-5 geographical expedition from Phuncholing to Thimbu via Paro, and thence to Dewangiri via Punakha, Tongsa, and Tashigang (p. 64). Until one reaches this point, more than half-way through the book, it is by no means clear how much of Mr. Karan's description rests on personal observation; it would have been helpful if he had given this information much earlier, and, with it, some account of the time spent at each of the major places visited or *en route* from one to another, not only in 1964-5 but also during an earlier visit that he appears to have made in 1961.

Eight or nine pages each, on average, are given to such topics as geographic exploration, the physiographic setting, the climate, vegeta-

tion, and soil, the economic pattern, the population, the different cultures, transport and trade, and politics, with maps, plans, and illustrations. The political sections are written in a journalistic style altogether different from that of the rest of the book, and contain such loose statements as that 'Bhutan . . . has *always* [my italics] been within the Indian sphere of influence'. This claim is at odds with the interesting and useful 'Appendix' containing principal treaties and documents, and also with the account of the Tashi Lama's mediating between the East India Company and the Deb Rajah in 1773. Indeed it was not until 1910, within living memory, that the Bhutan government agreed 'to be guided by the British Government in regard to its external relations' (p. 96), and not until 1949 that this provision was inherited by a specifically Indian government (p. 97) (incidentally, a misprint in the text of the 1949 treaty, p. 97, has the effect of increasing the Indian subsidy tenfold, from 'one lakh' to '1,000,000' rupees).

Throughout the book titles and personal names seem to have given the author some trouble. 'Shabdung' appears now as a title ('the shabdungs or dharmarajas', p. 63) now as a personal name ('Shabdung, the Tibetan monk', p. 7); 'Deb Raja' alternates, similarly, with 'the Deb Raja' (p. 3); and Queen Kesang appears on p. 86 as 'Queen Ashi', a title (spelt 'aji' in the 'Glossary', p. 99). For those who appreciate etymological translations of proper names there are a number of fine specimens, including 'Jigme Dorji Wangchuk (the "Fearless Mighty One")' (p. 12); then why not Lal Bahadur Shastri (p. 19) as the 'Red Brave Scholar'? The 'Glossary' (p. 99) disguises the connexion between 'Brug-yul Land of thunder (Bhutan)' a mis-translation of the Tibetan '*brug-yul*', and 'Druk Gyalpo Dragon king (ruler of Bhutan)' (Tib. '*brug rgyal-po*') and 'Druk-pa sect' (Tib. '*brug-pa*').

Since any information on Bhutan is still difficult to come by, this book, expensive though it is, and comprising barely 100 pages of text, can still be sure of a welcome; and this is particularly true of its maps and plans.

R. K. SPRIGG

ALASTAIR LAMB: *Asian frontiers: studies in a continuing problem*. x, 246 pp. London: Pall Mall Press, 1968. 35s.

Having made the study of specific frontiers his own special field—in diplomatic, military, economic, and ethnographic terms—the author