

AGENCY FOR INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT WASHINGTON, D. C. 20523 BIBLIOGRAPHIC INPUT SHEET	FOR AID USE ONLY
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1. SUBJECT CLASSIFICATION	A. PRIMARY Social Science
	B. SECONDARY General Social Science

2. TITLE AND SUBTITLE
 The Bodpagaun Project: A Case of Economic Development

3. AUTHOR(S)
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4. DOCUMENT DATE Winter 1975	5. NUMBER OF PAGES 33p.	6. ARC NUMBER NP-301.5072-C327
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7. REFERENCE ORGANIZATION NAME AND ADDRESS
 Rice University
 Program of Development Studies
 Houston, Texas 77001

8. SUPPLEMENTARY NOTES (Sponsoring Organization, Publishers, Availability)

9. ABSTRACT
 The Tibetan community located in a high Himalayan valley of Nepal has long been the site of economic development programs. The developmental schemes carried out in this community involved agricultural and dairy programs which were financed and managed for several years by international aid agencies. These economic programs were designed to provide the Tibetan community with a stable means of livelihood, but the programs were generally unsuccessful due, for the most part, to social forces in the community that blocked the implementation of the economic programs. By examining the present economic foundations of the Tibetan settlement, we see that the same social factors that foiled the planned economic programs also worked to encourage other means of economic development. Known as the Bodpagaun Project, this instance of engineered development serves as a heuristic example for investigating the ways that sociocultural factors may influence attempts to initiate development in small societies of South Asia. The sociocultural factors particularly prevalent in the history of the Bodpagaun Project are social groups and religious values, both of which had a great deal to do with the outcome of the individual development programs as well as with the relative success of the overall project itself.

10. CONTROL NUMBER PN-AAB-187	11. PRICE OF DOCUMENT
12. DESCRIPTORS Nepal, Agricultural, Dairy, Social, South Asia, Religious Values, Social Groups	13. PROJECT NUMBER 931-17-995-534
	14. CONTRACT NUMBER AID/GSD-3302
	15. TYPE OF DOCUMENT Research Paper

PROGRAM OF DEVELOPMENT STUDIES
121 Sewall Hall
WILLIAM MARSH RICE UNIVERSITY
Houston, Texas 77001

Paper No. 63

The Bodpagaun Project:
A Case of
Economic Development

by

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Winter, 1975

The author is a graduate student in Anthropology and Sociology at Rice University. This paper reports research related to AID contract no. AID/csd-3302, on "Distribution of Gains, Wealth and Income from Development."

Program Discussion Papers are preliminary materials circulated to stimulate discussion and critical comment. References in publications to Discussion Papers should be cleared with the author to protect the tentative character of these papers.

Preface

This study is the third and concluding work in a series of three discussion papers that deal with sociocultural factors in economic development. The two preceding discussion papers in this tripartite series focus on socioeconomic theories of village development: the first paper provides a general overview of the literature concerning non-economic variables in economic growth, and the second discussion paper treats social groups and religious values as two prominent factors in the development of little communities. Some of the theoretical concepts brought out in the earlier two papers are exemplified in this work through a case study of a developmental project in which religious beliefs and certain types of social groups had a direct bearing on the outcome of economic programs. Implicit within this study is the assumption that a cultural perspective allows one to better comprehend the total socioeconomic network in a village society, thus enabling one to choose the most appropriate economic programs and methods of implementation for that community.

Within the context of the Program of Development Studies' multi-faceted approach to income distribution, this discussion paper explores social groups and religious values that affected the planning and implementation of a developmental project. The study of social groups and religious values is one of seven topics brought up by von der Mehden in the Program of Development Studies' outline of research.¹ Presently, only a few works examine

¹These seven questions and the overall scheme in which they exist are presented in James Land, "Distribution of Gains, Wealth and Income from Economic and Political Development," Program of Development Studies Discussion Paper no. 24, Rice University, Houston, Texas (1972).

the role of social groups and religious values in economic development, and this literature indicates that the religious ideas and social bodies, which are often integrally related to autochthonous economic systems, are prime factors in the implementation of developmental projects--especially in those projects conducted at the village level. To contribute toward a better understanding of this subject, this discussion paper analyzes the sociocultural factors involved in a developmental project that was carried out in Nepal throughout the 1960s.

The Bodpagaun Project: A Case of Economic Development

1. The Background and Cultural Setting of the Project

The Bodpagaun valley is permanently inhabited by 325 Tibetans, who share the region in the summer months with several hundred Nepalese who graze their livestock in and around the valley.¹ In 1959, the Tibetans came to Bodpagaun to escape the military occupation of Tibet by the Chinese. They built two small villages on the northern side of the valley--each village consisting of a distinctive population. One village is comprised of people from eastern Tibet who refer to themselves as Khampas; the people in the second village, the Brog-pas, came from western Tibet where they were highland pastoralists. The people of both groups made long and difficult journeys from Tibet into Nepal, fighting their way across the Tibetan plateau--a flight that cost every family the death of some of its members and the loss of personal properties as well as entailing extreme hardships of other kinds. When the refugees finally arrived in Nepal, much of their wealth was confiscated by Nepalese police and the adjustment to the new environment took its toll in death from diseases to which the Tibetans had no natural immunity. After an evaluation of the situation by the United Nations, the task of relocating the Tibetans was placed in the hands of the International Red

*This paper is based on work performed in conjunction with the author's dissertation.

¹Bodpagaun is a pseudonym.

Cross and other aid organizations. Based on a one-day survey of the Bodpagaun valley in the autumn months, the International Red Cross concluded that no one lived in the valley and that Tibetans could be relocated in this cold, high area which greatly resembles the Tibetans' homeland.

Attracted by the reports of the Tibetan-like climate in the valley, several hundred of the refugees made their way to Bodpagaun and settled down in yak-hair tents. Rapid progress was made on the construction of the Bodpagaun settlement, and with medical aid, technical advice, and financial support from western organizations, the Tibetans had built two small groups of rough wooden houses by the early 1960s and began to develop an economy. Two large parcels of land for homes and agricultural fields were purchased by the International Red Cross from the Nepalese government. Near each newly constructed house a small piece of land was allotted for a garden, and what remained of the total purchase was kept for communal fields. Food rations were flown into Bodpagaun for the first few years of the project while fields were being cleared and crops were sown. A house of worship of the Tibetan Buddhist type was built beyond the easterly of the two villages for the religious needs of the settlement. The problems of health which existed among the Tibetans were treated by a Swiss physician who was stationed in the settlement as part of the International Red Cross staff. Forestry engineers, agronomists, carpenters, and dairy farmers were among the other specialists who were posted in Bodpagaun at one time or another for the purpose of aiding the Tibetans.

To generate an economy that would give the Tibetans a stable means of support, the International Red Cross contracted specialists to

investigate the economic potentials of the Bodpagaun area and to propose suggestions for the development of a self-sustaining economy. The first studies conducted in the valley predicted that agricultural and horticultural pursuits would be the most appropriate and productive means of subsistence. After early experiments with agriculture failed, additional studies were called for by the International Red Cross. These secondary studies concluded that the agricultural programs did indeed fail and that a dairy program might be a more feasible method of implementing a thriving economy. Yet, after years of unsuccessful operation, the dairy program was abandoned, and no further economic programs were explored. At this point in the history of the Bodpagaun Project, the majority of the Tibetans in the settlement had adapted to their new home and had found their own means of gaining an income.

Tibetans are known to be ardent traders, enjoying activities associated with trading, and possessing a store of knowledge, customs, and strategies that make them highly competent and prosperous in their trading ventures. Most of the Tibetans in Bodpagaun eke out an existence by bartering salt for grains that are grown by the native Nepalese. The Tibetans buy rock salt in the lowlands of Nepal and pack it back to Bodpagaun on their horses. Throughout the year, the Tibetans deliver the salt to the Nepalese villages that lie as much as three days from Bodpagaun. Tibetans are quick to calculate the profit to be made in a trading transaction and the relative need of their buyer, for these arts are greatly prized abilities in Tibetan culture. Among the other customs that aid the Tibetans in their bartering are social alliances, ritual brotherhoods, family ties, and business pacts-- all of which join the Tibetans into groups that increase their capacity for profitable trade. Many of these groups are founded on religious ties: some

groups are composed of members of the same religious sect, and other groups consist of members who are united by religious oaths and ceremonies.

The social organization of the Tibetan community is structured around several different types of kin groups and associations which serve specialized economic functions. Most basic to the everyday economy is the social unit of the household. Households vary in size from the small nuclear family to the larger extended family that may consist of members from several nuclear families and three or four generations. The people in a household divide the labors entailed in daily existence among themselves, and each member takes on duties that are in keeping with his (or her) abilities, knowledge, and social status. Within this division of labor, adult women do most of the work relating to the preparation of food and the care of children. Adult males tend the horses, work leather, do heavy labors around the house and in the fields, and undertake trade and other business transactions. Tibetan children are assigned the more menial chores such as carrying water from the springs, bringing the cows home at night, and caring for their smaller siblings. In a home where grandparents are present, the grandfather's familial roles consist chiefly of pious acts and giving advice to the rest of the family, whereas the grandmother supervises her daughter or daughter-in-law in the kitchen and passes on her knowledge of child rearing and Tibetan handicrafts to the younger women. The Bodpagaun households are, in this way, the prime loci of the daily economy.

On the next highest level of economic activity and social organization are the Tibetan patri-clans. These kin groupings join several households together and provide large labor forces and pools of resources that can

be employed for economic purposes. Patri-clans are composed of people related genetically and consanguineally through male lines of descent to a common but long forgotten ancestor. Even though most of the patri-clans were severely fragmented during the exodus from Tibet, those which remain are still an extremely important facet of social organization in Bodpagaun. Leadership within a patri-clan is assigned to the oldest of all the males who are descended from a common ancestor. The group of male descendants, their wives, and their children all belong to a single patri-clan. A large and well united patri-clan is often a major element in the economy, sometimes attaining the fundamental importance of the household itself. Whenever there is need for a labor force beyond that which is available in a single household, the members of a patri-clan may join their forces to perform the task at hand. Such coalitions form to clear new fields, as this undertaking necessitates several men to dislodge and roll large boulders. Another activity requiring the cooperation of large social groups is the pasturing of horses and yaks. The primary pasture areas in Bodpagaun are several hours walk from the settlement, and the animals kept in the pasture need constant attention. For this reason, representatives of a patri-clan are stationed permanently in the pasture to care for all the animals owned by the members of the clan. The patri-clans of Bodpagaun become the center of extensive activity during the trading season when families join together to form large caravans that afford protection and convenience on the trail and also a united voice in bargaining at the southerly bazaars.

Greater in size than the patri-clans and more vital to Bodpagaun's economic development are the tribal groupings in the settlement. As stated

in the foregoing paragraphs, the Tibetans in one portion of the settlement are Khampas from eastern Tibet, and the inhabitants of the other part of Bodpagaun are Brog-pas who were formerly highland pastoralists in western Tibet. A small percentage of the Tibetans in Bodpagaun do not fit into either of these categories, but they identify themselves as being from the Tibetan capital at Lhasa or from other areas. The Brog-pas and the Khampas of Bodpagaun are set apart by their dress, dialect, marriage patterns, and religious practices--the same distinctions frequently used to define a body of people as a tribe. Most outstanding of all the differences between the two groups are their religious practices: the people of the Brog-pa village identify themselves with the Bon sect of Tibetan Buddhism, whereas the Khampas follow Tibetan Buddhism in the Sa-skyapa form. The Brog-pas support a Bon clergy, maintain a house of worship containing Bon deities, and carry out their religious rites according to the manner prescribed in their Bon texts. Khampas, in contrast, conduct their ceremonies in their own temples under the direction of Sa-skyapa lamas (religious specialists). These two sects of Tibetan Buddhism are clearly differentiated in their history and doctrine. Bon is a synthesis of Buddhism and the indigenous supernaturalistic system of pre-Buddhist Tibet, and its savior figure is an autochthonous Tibetan who supposedly lived long before the Buddha Gautama Siddhartha appeared in India. In comparison to Bon, the Sa-skyapa sect does not maintain very many of the ancient beliefs and acts of pre-Buddhist Tibet, and it recognizes Gautama Siddhartha as the true Buddha. Although these and the other differences described above may appear to be inconsequential, they are accompanied by intense in-group and out-group sentiments that have precipitated recurring rivalry and conflict between the two tribes. As we

will shortly see in an analysis of the agricultural program, this tribal friction was one of the significant factors contributing to the failure of the economic development in Bodpagaun.

A second factor that impeded the developmental programs was the religious system of the local Nepalese population. Basing their knowledge of Bodpagaun on a hasty winter survey of the valley, the International Red Cross did not know that Nepalese occupied the area during the warmer half of the year, but when the Bodpagaun Project began, it soon became apparent that the Tibetans were going to have to coexist in the valley with the indigenous Nepalese. Several statements to this effect were issued from the administrators of the Bodpagaun Project, and efforts were made to integrate the Nepalese people into the project's economic programs. However, due to what seems to be a lack of understanding or appreciation for Nepalese culture, the sacred beliefs and customs of the Nepalese were grossly violated by the project administrators and the Tibetan community--thus alienating the Nepalese and losing their cooperation in the developmental schemes.

Nepalese religious beliefs can be succinctly described as a mixture of Hinduism, Buddhism, and local magic. Hindu elements are readily seen in Nepalese social structure, for the society is organized into castes that are differentiated by occupational roles and degrees of ritual pollution. Interaction among the castes is strictly governed by the pollution concepts which prohibit one from taking food prepared by lower castes. Another Hindu trait found in Nepalese religion is the belief that the cow (as distinguished from the water buffalo or the yak) is a reincarnation of a human being and should be treated with veneration. The Buddhist aspects of Nepalese religion are contained mainly in the philosophy of asceticism which derives from the Four

Noble Truths of Buddhist doctrine. Many of the other acts and beliefs in Nepalese supernaturalism consist of local deities, practices of magic, and shamans who propitiate and manipulate spirit beings. Hinduism, Buddhism, and the local religious traditions in Nepalese supernaturalism do not stand alone, but rather are intermingled into a unified system of religion.

The religious values and customs of both the Nepalese and the two Tibetan tribes were central factors which greatly affected the economic programs of the Bodpagaun Project. The differences between the religious systems of the Nepalese, Khampa Tibetans, and the Brog-pa Tibetans set these three groups apart and often prevented their collaboration in the developmental programs attempted in the valley. By examining the two chief programs of economic development in light of our knowledge of the local religious values and population groupings, we may come to a better understanding of how the self-interests of the three religiously distinguished groups thwarted the plans of the project.¹

2. The Agricultural Program

After their first surveys of the Bodpagaun valley, agronomists representing the International Red Cross decided that the economic basis of the settlement should be agricultural, and that it should concentrate on the use of seeds that had been domesticated in the West specifically for high altitude, cold weather climates. With the twenty-five hectares of arable land in the valley not already sown by the Nepalese during the summer months,

¹The importance of social groups and religious values in situations of South Asian development is brought out in my earlier work, "Social Groups and Religious Values as Factors in Economic Development: A South Asian Example," Program of Development Studies Discussion Paper no. 62, Rice University, Houston, Texas (1975).

the project leaders opened eighteen hectares, most of which was to be used as a communal farm. Fruit trees, barley, wheat, rye, buckwheat, beans, peas, onions, and potatoes were experimented with on a large scale in the newly cleared fields on the margins of the valley floor. However, the late spring and early fall frosts, together with the 3050 meter elevation and poor quality of the soil, were too harsh for most of the crops with the exception of potatoes and buckwheat. It was, therefore, determined that these two crops should be planted in the majority of the fields. In reports written by the project director in 1962, the potato harvest was described (by European standards) as small; the yield of cereals was said to be insignificant. The total harvest for 1962 is listed as follows:¹

Buckwheat	100 kg	Beans	25 kg
Barley	280 kg	Peas	4 kg
Onions	180 kg	Potatoes	1200 kg

It is stated in the early project reports that, in future seasons, potatoes must be in the primary crop, and that the possibilities of a pastoral economy were being investigated. The project directors at this time also commented that leaders were absent among the Tibetan population of the settlement, and that the Tibetan and the Nepalese populations must be brought together in joint economic programs if the project was to succeed.

On May 31, 1963, the Swiss Agency for Technological Assistance took charge of the Bodpagaun Project, as well as the other Tibetan refugee settlements in Nepal, but (even though the name of the administration had changed) the general trends and the particular programs of development

¹These figures and the other data pertaining to the early years of the agricultural program are contained in Edouard Rieben, Rapport sur le probleme de Dhorpatan, Service de la Cooperation technique (Kathmandu: S.A.T.A. file number 109, Dec., 1962); and Emil Rauch, Bericht, zum Fluchtlings-Ansiedlungsprojekt des IKRK in Dhorpatan Westnepal (Kathmandu: S.A.T.A. file number 110, January, 1963).

continued on as they had before. A total of twenty-two hectares of land had been cleared for cultivation by the summer of 1963 with potatoes as the prime crop, and barley, oats, buckwheat, rye, flax, and vegetables as secondary crops.¹ Other high altitude domesticates were tested on a trial basis in the large common field that made-up the majority of the cultivable land. Yet, in spite of the expanded fields and attempts to grow new varieties of crops, the agricultural yields were not yet sufficient to feed even a fourth of the seventy Tibetan families then residing in Bodpagaun.² The poor agricultural output was partially attributed to a lack of leadership and an inability to motivate the Tibetans into methodical, organized labor.³

By the spring of 1968, the agricultural program had slightly improved, and the possibility of converting the economy to pastoralism had been thoroughly explored.⁴ Sixteen hectares of potatoes and six hectares of rye were being sown in the Tibetan fields at this stage in the project, and an

¹The information regarding this period in the history of the project has been gained from the three reports of Bernhard Muller, Bericht von Herrn Dr. Bernhard Muller uber das landwirtschaftliche Projekt in Dhorpatan/Westnepal (Kathmandu: S.A.T.A. file number 111, April, 1963); Schweizerisches hilfswerk fuer assereuropaeische gebiete (Zurich: S.A.T.A. file number 113, summer, 1963); and Dhor Patan, valley development and resettlement project (Zurich: S.A.T.A. file number 114, June, 196.).

²To compensate for the inadequate agricultural production, surplus food rations donated by the United States were being flown to Bodpagaun at a great expense to the aid organization.

³Bernhard Muller (summer, 1963), op. cit.

⁴Much of the data on the project between 1963 and 1968 have been gleaned from the report of K. Marugg, Schlussbericht von K. Marugg (Kathmandu: S.A.T.A. file number 253, May, 1968).

additional four hectares were being used for growing vegetables, oats, barley, buckwheat, and corn. As before, however, the yields (with the exception of some of the buckwheat) were low and achieved only at the expense of great labors. The harvest of 1968 was sufficient to feed only one-third of the Tibetans in Bodpagaun.¹ In search for an alternate economic foundation for the settlement, a dairy operation was run on a trial basis between the years 1963 and 1966. Cheese and butter were made in the dairy, using milk from Nepalese water buffaloes pastured in Bodpagaun throughout the warmer months. It was hoped that the dairy industry would provide the Tibetans with an income from the commercial sale of the dairy products, but (for reasons that will be explained in the following pages) the dairy program was unsuccessful. The ineffectiveness of the dairy industry confirmed the earlier supposition that farming would be the soundest mainstay for the economy.

From both early and the later reports on Bodpagaun, we see that it was continually difficult to organize the Tibetan population into community programs. As mentioned above, this was often attributed to a scarcity of Tibetan leaders, but in a later report on the project it is held that the Tibetans' inability to work as a collective body resulted from social conflicts between the two tribal groupings in the settlement. In his final report written in 1968, the project director, K. Marugg, states that "religious differences among the project members lead, again and again, to inner friction."² Large-scale power struggles had taken place in the Tibetan camp since the first years of the project, and the two main factions

¹This figure has been computed using the volume of production cited by Marugg, op. cit., and the formula of per capita consumption used by Rauch, op. cit.

²K. Marugg, op. cit. (translated from German), p. 1.

were the two tribes described by Marugg as the followers of the Bon and the Sa-skya sects of Tibetan Buddhism. Marugg further notes that the leaders of these two religious groups deliberately undermined mutual labors of the two tribes, and thus impeded the communal programs of the project.¹

When research was carried out in Bodpagaun during 1973 and 1974, the Tibetans' communal field lay fallow, functioning only as an open pasture for the Nepalese livestock in the summer months. The Tibetans' explanation for the abandonment of the fields centered around Nepalese cows and water buffaloes which they said could not be prevented from entering the fields and eating whatever was planted there. Potatoes, cereals, and vegetables were still being grown in the smaller fields and gardens owned by individual families.

Social conflicts involved in the agricultural program

From understandings gained during fieldwork in Bodpagaun,² it is clear that there were two major social conflicts that had much to do with the eventual failure of the project's agricultural program. The first of these conflicts has been pointed out by Marugg in his statement regarding the internal friction between the two tribal groups in the project. The second conflict existed between the Tibetans and the local Nepalese, and this was a result of the killing and eating of cows by the Tibetans and the European directors of the settlement. As will be seen in the following

¹Ibid., p. 4.

²The data were obtained from many interviews with Nepalese, Tibetans, and representatives of the Swiss Agency for Technological Assistance during anthropological fieldwork conducted in Nepal from September, 1972, through March, 1974.

analysis of these two social conflicts, the stress between the two Tibetan tribal groupings seems to have been a predisposing factor that weakened the organization of the communal programs, whereas the friction between the local Nepalese and the Tibetans was the decisive factor and an excuse for the Tibetans to finally quit the community field.

Strong animosity was present among the members of the Bodpagaun settlement from the first years of the community's existence. This hostility derived from the cultural differences between the two main tribal groupings, but it appears that this conflict could have been avoided when the original settlers were selected. The two tribal groups presently in Bodpagaun were chosen out of other possible Tibetan groups that were in exodus from Tibet during the late fifties and the early sixties. When the Swiss representative of the International Red Cross first announced that the Bodpagaun settlement would be receiving Tibetan refugees, many Tibetans came to the Bodpagaun valley and sought acceptance into the budding community. From this body of applicants, the original population of the settlement was formed. Shortly thereafter, a large number of the Tibetans who had come to Bodpagaun directly from the Tibetan border decided that Bodpagaun was not a safe refuge because of its close proximity to China and the current state of Nepalese-Chinese relations. For this reason, and also to be closer to their theocratic ruler (the Dalai Lama), these Tibetans left Bodpagaun and went to Dharamsala, India. Those Tibetans who remained in the camp became one of the present-day tribes in the community. To replace the Tibetans who had left the settlement, the International Red Cross transferred a new group of Tibetans to Bodpagaun from one of its temporary aid camps in central Nepal. The Tibetans in this replacement group

comprise the second tribal grouping in the camp. These two tribes, the Khampa and the Brog-pa, practiced two divergent forms of Tibetan Buddhism-- Sa-skyapa and Bon, respectively. By ignoring the cultural dissimilarities among the population groupings of the Tibetan refugees, the organizers of the settlement unknowingly brought together two antagonistic categories of Tibetans.

Tension has existed between the different orders of Tibetan Buddhism since the tenth century, A.D. The religious orders were in close association with Tibet's ruling powers throughout Tibetan history, and at various times they constituted the chief political force in the nation. Power struggles which took place between the seats of Tibetan Buddhism frequently occurred as violent religious wars in which the sects vied for the control of the Tibetan masses. As they exist today, the denominations of Tibetan Buddhism have (for the most part) resolved their differences, but ill feelings which are still harbored may be brought to the surface whenever the followers of the different orders are thrown together in a situation such as the Bodpagaun Project.

The Bon and the Sa-skyapa religious orders of Bodpagaun acted as opposing social poles, around which the two groups of Tibetans clustered. Every Tibetan in Bodpagaun identified himself with one of the two sects--even if he had not formerly done so in Tibet. This social dichotomy is well symbolized in the geographical layout of the settlement--the Bon-po and the Sa-skyapa churches lay just beyond their respective villages. In 1962, the International Red Cross built the Bon church with the gross misunderstanding that this one church would serve as a house of worship for all the Tibetans in the settlement. As may be guessed, the adherents of Sa-skyapa were jealous and resentful of this action, and in the following years they

built their own church without financial support of any kind from the project. Emerging from both sects were powerful religious leaders who exerted a strong influence over the actions of the two tribal groups. Each of these religious leaders had been a prominent figure in wealthy Tibetan monasteries in the areas whence the tribal groups had come. It is said that the priest, or lama, of the Bon-po was an energetic man who promoted the spiritual as well as the economic development of his village. The Tibetans say that when this man was present, "all of the fences in the Bon-po village were perfectly straight." Similarly praised for his leadership capabilities was the Sa-skyapa head lama, who was especially noted for his scholastic knowledge and medical abilities. Together, the two lamas maintained a tight control over the members of the settlement and were responsible for many of the achievements, as well as the problems, in the community.

The relationship of the two religious groups in Bodpagaun is reflected in some of the events that transpired during the years of the project. Construction of a pan-community schoolhouse in the Sa-skyapa village upset the members of the Bon-po in the same way that the project-sponsored Bon-po church angered the Sa-skyapa. When heavy snows toppled the first schoolhouse, a new one was planned for the settlement. However, heated debate ensued over whether it should be built in the Bon-po or the Sa-skyapa village. This question was finally resolved by locating the new schoolhouse halfway between the two villages. However, when classes began in the new school, the Tibetan teachers from the two villages quarreled and undermined each other's teaching so much that classes were disrupted for several years. Another incident which demonstrates the hostility between the two religious groups involved the powerful leader of the Bon-po. In the

mid-1960s, the highly charismatic leader of the Bon-po village was violently assassinated one night on the steps of his church by two men who were never identified. A few years after this event, the Sa-skyapa lama moved his practice to Kathmandu. The absolute ramifications of these incidents cannot be determined, but their overall impact on intra-community relations can easily be surmised.

With this intensive conflict existing within the Bodpagaun settlement, it is not surprising that problems were encountered in an agricultural program that demanded the collaboration of the two tribes. The agricultural failings cannot be adequately explained as resulting from an absence of leadership within the community as the official reports lead one to think. Persons with exceptional leadership qualities were present in the settlement from its beginning, but these leaders were evidently misinterpreted by the project directors as being solely religious in their capacities and having little or nothing to do with secular behavior. However, as we have seen in the preceding paragraphs, the leaders of the two tribes had a pronounced influence on the Tibetans' activities. Highly organized labors and efficacious leadership had produced flourishing agricultural plots within the confines of the Khampa and the Brog-pa villages.

Compounding the strife already present in the settlement, and further contributing to the failure of the agricultural program, was a long-standing tension between the Tibetans and the local Nepalese. The Tibetans are not keen on discussing the stresses within their society and are hesitant to admit that intra-settlement bickering and jealousy were at all to blame for the problems they experienced with communal farming. They, instead, assign all culpability for the fallow field to their Nepalese neighbors, for

(according to the Tibetans) serious trouble ensues whenever they chase Nepalese cows out of their planted fields. The Tibetans also say that the communal field, located several hundred meters from the nearest Tibetan home, is too difficult to watch over and protect from the cows that enter the field under the cover of night and eat the crops. All the Tibetans in the project seem to hold the notion that they would incur grave difficulties if they escorted Nepalese cows out of the field or drove them out with rocks and sticks, but these explanations are unrealistic and superficial without more detailed background information on certain incidents concerning Nepalese cows.

The Nepalese who pasture their livestock in Bodpagaun maintain Hindu religious beliefs that hold the cow to be sacred and strictly forbid its slaughter. Tibetans, in comparison, think of cows in much the same light as do westerners--as a source of milk and meat. Yet, Tibetans are also aware that the cow is sacred in Nepal and that the offense of slaying this animal is tantamount to homicide according to the stringently enforced Nepalese laws. Even though the Nepalese customs and laws pertaining to cows are clear enough to the Tibetans, it appears that one of the project officers did not think enough of the sanctity of cows to prevent his eating of beef.

A European administrator of the Tibetan refugee camps throughout Nepal came to Bodpagaun in the early years of the project and tried to initiate the practice of eating beef. He bought seven or eight cows (the accounts vary), tied them to stakes near the river at the center of the valley, and, with pistol in hand, he walked down the line of cows shooting each one in the head. Some of the beef was used for a feast to which the Tibetans and local Nepalese were invited, and the remainder was hung in storage for

the staff's meals throughout the oncoming winter. Horrified at what the westerner had done, the Nepalese quickly reported the matter to the district police in the zonal headquarters four days walk from Bodpagaun.¹ An uproar immediately followed, and the man responsible, along with most of the permanent European staff who lived at that time in Bodpagaun, hurriedly fled the area. The individual who slaughtered the cows left Nepal and was refused a visa when he attempted to return in later years.

Repercussions from the European's actions fell upon the Tibetans, for the Nepalese stigmatized the Tibetans in the settlement as slaughterers of cows and eaters of beef. Whenever a Nepalese cow would stray and be lost in Bodpagaun after this incident, the Nepalese would accuse the Tibetans of eating it. Once a missing cow was, in fact, found in the possession of two Tibetans from the settlement. Formal charges were lodged against the Tibetans, accusing them of stealing the cow with the intention of butchering it. Brought to a Nepalese court, the two Tibetans were tried, found guilty of stealing the cow, and were heavily fined for their actions. Nepalese cows which entered the communal field prior to this time were herded out by the Tibetans, but after the Tibetans saw their fellow villagers' scrape with the local police and courts, they were hesitant to be seen with Nepalese cows for any reason. Part of this reaction may have stemmed from guilt feelings, for the Tibetans do eat the beef of their own cows which they secretly slaughter.

¹The acts of slaughtering a cow and eating its flesh have widespread ramifications in the religious system of the local Nepalese. Not only are these acts ritually polluting, but they also may cause bad luck, illness, and sterility in the household (to oneself and also to surrounding peoples). For this reason, the Nepalese were especially upset when cows were being slaughtered in their vicinity.

Inter-tribal animosity and the problem of Nepalese cows in the Tibetans' communal field were sufficient reasons for the Tibetans to abandon the major plot in Bodpagaun's agricultural program. Enmity between the two Tibetan groups made the Tibetans reluctant to collaborate in a joint agricultural program. This tribal conflict can be understood as a latent cause of the program's failure. A manifest reason for the abandonment of the field is related to the Nepalese' accusations that Tibetans steal and kill cows that wander into the communal field. Both of these factors, each a conflict between social groups set apart by religious values, contributed to the failure of the major developmental program in the Bodpagaun Project.

3. The Dairy Program

Project reports from the directors of the Bodpagaun settlement repeatedly mention the possibility of implementing a dairy program that would integrate the Tibetans and the Nepalese in a cooperative dairy industry for the overall economic development of the region. Large-scale experiments were conducted from 1963 through 1966 to see if cheese and butter could be made with the milk from Nepalese water buffaloes and to determine if these dairy products could be sold in western Nepal. The dairy products were easily produced, but the cheese and butter could not be marketed among the Nepalese in the area.

The idea of instituting a dairy facility in Bodpagaun appears in the earliest of the project reports. In the first written proposals for the development of the settlement, Edouard Rieben stated that the basic economic activities should be directed towards pastoralism as they are in similar geographical areas of Switzerland.¹ It is noted in Rieben's proposals that

¹Edouard Rieben, op. cit.

the Nepalese in the area would have to be drawn into the program, and that livestock must be purchased by the project for the Tibetans in order to provide sufficient milk for a dairy operation. In a later report by Emil Rauch, it was concluded that it would be too difficult to produce or acquire fodder for large livestock in Bodpagaun throughout the winter, and therefore any milk used in a dairy industry would have to come from the animals of the Nepalese.¹ A panel of representatives from the Swiss Agency for Technological Assistance who met in May of 1963 decided that, because of the problems incurred in the agricultural program of the Bodpagaun Project, a cheese plant must be started as soon as possible.² In the summer of 1963, a cheese expert and an assistant were appointed to the staff in Bodpagaun, and shortly thereafter the dairy program was underway.

At a processing station built in the mountain pasture above the Bodpagaun valley, skim milk and clarified butter were bought from the Nepalese and made into cheese and refined butter. The aims of the dairy operation were to make cheese from the skim milk purchased from the Nepalese and to derive a durable food from the sour buttermilk which remains from the indigenous method of churning clarified butter. Once their plans had been announced to the Nepalese who tend their stock in the pasture, the dairy-masters began to separate the skim milk from the whole milk that was brought to them, returning the cream that remained to the Nepalese. The Nepalese churned the cream into butter and sold the residue sour buttermilk to the dairy where it was made into cream cheese. This arrangement was

¹Emil Rauch, op. cit.

²Zusammenfassung der Ergebnisse der Besprechungen, vom 2, Mai 1963 (Kathmandu: S.A.T.A. file number 112, May, 1963).

profitable for the Nepalese, and the dairy was able to make milk products that could be stored throughout the winter months when protein was not readily available as a food source. Once the cheese was formed, it could not be sold at any price to the Nepalese in the vicinity because the Nepalese had found out that the dairy-masters had violated certain Hindu religious principles connected with the preparation of foods.

Employing two young Nepalese as trainees in the dairy station, the Swiss dairy-masters worked with the skim milk and the buttermilk in attempts to create cheeses that would preserve well, be simple in their method of production, and appeal to the tastes of the local people.¹ Cheese was made with the skim milk supplied to the dairy from sixty Nepalese families in the region. The process of making skim milk cheese entailed pastuerizing, thickening with rennin, prechurning, settling, heating, stirring, pressing, and placing the pressed cheeses in a salt bath for twenty-four hours. In the case of buttermilk cheese, the protein content was extracted by cooking the buttermilk and then adding rennin and calcium chloride. The cooked buttermilk was next poured into sacks of fine cloth and left to drip for twenty-four hours, leaving a cream cheese. Upon removal from the cloth sacks, the cream cheese was placed into wooden frames and allowed to stand for several weeks. At the end of the pasture season, all of the cheeses were transported down to the valley floor where the cream cheese was mixed with salt, red pepper, and curry. The two Nepalese apprentices participated in each stage of the work and were instructed in cheese-making techniques so

¹Data concerning the dairy program are available in the extensive report by M. Bachmann, Rapport uber Milchprogramm Dhor Patan (Kathmandu: S.A.T.A. file number 152, December, 1965).

that they could continue their duties in the dairy station in the next season.

Difficulties were experienced in marketing the cheeses, as the produce of the dairy was considered by many Nepalese to be ritually polluted. In order to gain an opinion of the dairy products from the potential customers, a survey was conducted in six Nepalese villages to the south of Bodpagaun. Both the skim milk cheese and the cream cheese were offered to the people in the six villages; the results of the survey are presented in the following charts:¹

TABLE 1: Skim Milk Cheese and Cheese with a Little Fat

Village	No. of people present	No. that would taste cheese	Results	Comments
Nischi	7	7	poor	Two ex-soldiers had eaten it before
Baragoun	45	34	poor	Cheese was thrown away secretly
Tschour	27	3	poor	Brahman village
Adicoritschour	43	38	poor	Cheese completely unheard of
Bobang	51	49	poor	Kami are hungry!
Sugurdung	13	13	edible	Kami eat anything

TABLE 2: Cream Cheese with Curry and Red Pepper

Nischi	7	7	edible	Curry cheese OK, pepper too spicy
Baragoun	45	42	edible	Some cream cheese stolen
Tschour	27	3	edible	Brahman village
Adicoritschour	45	43	fair	No comment
Bobang	51	51	edible	Cream cheese already heard of through apprentice boys
Sogurdung	13	13	edible	No comment

¹The results of the survey have been taken from Table #2 of M. Bachmann, Ibid.

From the results presented in the two charts, we see that the villagers' opinions of the skim milk cheese were mostly negative, whereas their reaction to the cream cheese was generally neutral. The survey report also noted that neither type of cheese was deemed by the Nepalese to be worthy of buying, nor did the people enjoy the cheese enough to generate an interest in the art of cheese-making. Based on the information gained from the survey, the dairy-masters made seven conclusions in the survey report. Although most of these statements pertained to technical matters regarding mixing the cheese with local foods, the first of their conclusions concerned religious values associated with the cheese, stating that, "Religious principles prevent many Nepalese from enjoying the product."¹ No further explanation of this statement is given within the lengthy report on the dairy program, but its meaning may be better understood by analyzing the results of the survey and by briefly discussing certain values in Nepalese religion.

In Table 1, we see the comments "Kami are hungry!" and "Kami eat anything" for the villages of Bobang and Sugurdung. Bobang and Sugardung are villages comprised of people known as Kami--Nepalese who work metal and fall into the category of untouchables within the hierarchy of the caste system. Untouchables are looked upon by other castes as being intrinsically polluted and there are many restrictions limiting their interactions with the other caste groups so that the untouchables' ritual pollution will not contaminate the people of higher castes.² These restrictions placed on caste

¹M. Bachmann, Ibid., p. 5 (translated from German).

²A more extensive explanation of caste interaction and pollution concepts is given in my earlier work, "Social Groups and Religious Values as Factors in Economic Development: A South Asian Example," op. cit.

interaction include numerous food taboos which prevent people of other castes from accepting foods prepared by untouchables. As indicated in Table 2, the apprentice boys who worked in the dairy plant came from Bobang, and were thus Kami--untouchables prevented by religious codes from preparing food for other castes. This accounts for the fact that only one-ninth of the people in the Brahman village of Tschour would eat the cheese. It is believed that Brahmans are affected more than any other caste by the consumption of polluted food, for it would defile their highly pure state and necessitate elaborate rites to remove the contagious supernatural force. Through their actions, the Brahman caste determines the local standards of ritual cleanliness for the rest of the caste community. Other castes in the middle of the social hierarchy would probably try to emulate the Brahmans and gain status within the caste system by refusing to eat the dairy's cheese after hearing what precedent the Brahmans had set. The use of the two untouchable boys as apprentices in the dairy plant was a breach of Hindu food taboos, and it limited the market of cheese sales to lower caste villages.¹

In spite of the dairy-masters' desire to improve the dairy, the program was discontinued after two years of operation. In the dairy-masters' report on the cheese survey, they enumerate several suggestions for the continuation of the dairy program. These suggestions deal with technical aspects of the cheese production and request a budget for specialized equipment and personnel to manage the cheese station. Included in the list of

¹Hindu doctrines of pollution traditionally assert that westerners are ritually contaminated in much the same manner as are untouchables, but, from this author's experiences and interactions with the Nepalese castes in the Bodpagaun area, it seems that the castes around Bodpagaun do not see westerners as being polluted. Thus, the Swiss who operated the cheese plant probably were not prominent factors which would have caused the higher castes to avoid the eating of the cheese.

personnel are the two Nepalese apprentices who had worked in the station during the previous season. No further comment is made of the religious principles "that prevent the Nepalese from eating the cheese." In a separate report that evaluated the dairy program for consideration of further financing, it was decided that, due to the technical and cultural difficulties experienced in the program, it did not warrant additional funding.¹ This appraisal of the dairy program also mentioned that the project was to be completely stabilized by 1967. A detailed description of Bodpagaun's economy, written in May, 1968, makes no reference whatsoever of the dairy program, which was evidently abandoned in the previous year.²

4. Bodpagaun 1974: Tibetan Traders

When the research for this study was carried out in Bodpagaun, all the Europeans who were at one time or another related to the Bodpagaun Project were gone. What remained was a Tibetan village, without a dairy operation and without crops in the large communal field but with an economic basis that is in keeping with traditional modes of Tibetan livelihood. As noted in our short cultural description of the settlement, the Tibetans carry on trade between southerly bazaars and villages surrounding Bodpagaun. Potatoes grown by the Tibetans are carried by horse nine days south of Bodpagaun to the bazaars and sold for cash; with this money salt and other supplies such as rice, sugar, kerosene, cloth, and matches are purchased. Once the supplies are packed back to Bodpagaun, much of the salt

¹ Stellungnahme von Robert Jenny zum Milchprogramm Dhor Patan im Zusammenhang mit der Finanzplanung (Zurich: S.A.T.A. file number 162 [attached comments], February, 1966).

² K. Marugg, op. cit.

is bartered for cereal grains grown by Nepalese in the region. Some of the other supplies are consumed by the Tibetans themselves, and yet another portion is sold in the inns which the Tibetans have opened. The Tibetan inns are little more than private residences along the main thoroughfare of the Bodpagaun valley, offering tea, home-brewed alcohol, meals, a place where travelers may spend the night, and selling the goods brought up the mountains from the bazaars. Although only approximately one-eighth of the Tibetans are directly involved with the four inns in Bodpagaun, the general activity of trading is something that includes the majority of the Tibetans in the settlement.

To transport their trade goods, the Tibetans maintain a large number of horses. Many of the horses were brought to Bodpagaun from Tibet when the refugees entered Nepal, and additional horses were purchased by the Swiss Agency for Technological Assistance for the more needy families in the settlement. The Swiss employed the Tibetans and their horses in the early years of the project to carry supplies and equipment into the valley--apparently never realizing that the Tibetans would continue their transport services after the construction of the project was completed, or how fruitful a trading-oriented economy could be. Unwittingly, the comparatively small investment made in buying horses, and the initial encouragement given to the trading activities resulted in a viable economic foundation for the settlers and a means for stimulating economic development throughout the Bodpagaun area.

When the Tibetan traders travel between the bazaars and Bodpagaun, they do so in small caravans which usually consist of four or five Tibetans and their horses. The Tibetans refuse to travel alone, for they claim that highwaymen might rob and maybe even kill them as frequently occurred

in Tibet. In reality, however, the Nepalese trails are reasonably safe and the need for several individuals derives from the tasks required in a trading expedition: leading the horses, trailing the horses, collecting the animals in the morning after they have been pastured for the night, guarding the supplies while horses, firewood, and water are being gathered, and possibly staying for several days along the trail with a lame horse. The most important benefits gained from going to the bazaar in a large group are the economic advantage to be had in selling and buying in large quantities and the possibility of working for a merchant who desires to hire a caravan to transport his goods. If a Tibetan does not belong to a large family which can carry on these functions, then he will band together with other Tibetans in trading associations. These associations are made-up of men from the same tribe or, in other words, men who are of the same religious sect. Some of these business alliances are sanctified by a religious vow of brotherhood or a religious ceremony that is designed to unite men by supernatural ties. This swearing of brotherhood is known as a gnyen bzos, or "relative-making," and the religious ceremony is a mna bzag-pa. Associations founded on religious affiliation and partnerships bound with religious ceremonies are two institutions that have worked to create interest groups that are central to the trading economy of the settlement.

In the role of traders, the Tibetans function as middlemen who link the economy of Bodpagaun to the greater economy of Nepal. Local produce of the Tibetans and the Nepalese is converted through the Tibetans' trading activities into exogenous foods and manufactured goods that raise the standard of living in the villages around Bodpagaun. The general development in and around the valley can be measured by the changes which have occurred in the Nepalese population between 1963 and 1973. A census taken in 1963

by representatives of the Bodpagaun Project indicated that not one of the adult Nepalese knew the name of the king of Nepal, and little (if any) manufactured goods were owned by the people.¹ From observations made in Bodpagaun during the period from May, 1973 to March, 1974, it is evident that extensive modernization has taken place, for manufactured goods are now commonplace in most of the Nepalese dwellings, and the basic features of the national government are known by many adult men. A great deal of this development can be attributed to the diffusion of new ideas and ways of life from the progressive bazaar towns south of Bodpagaun. The primary vehicles for this sudden diffusion of modern elements have been the Tibetan traders who bring the innovations back to the remote villages. Nepalese people are staid in their ways; few of the local Nepalese venture as far away from their village as the bazaar centers, and none of the indigenous Nepalese who were interviewed in Bodpagaun had been to the Nepalese city of Kathmandu. In comparison, Tibetans are enthusiastic travelers. They pride themselves on their knowledge of the greater world and often make ostentatious displays of their modern possessions which have prestigious brand names and are current with the latest fashions. By means of their trading activities, the Tibetans have joined the Bodpagaun area to the market centers and fostered much of the development that has taken place in and around Bodpagaun. Expressed in the terminology of developmental experts, they have taken the role of intermediaries between the micro, or regional, level of economy and the macro level economy of the nation.

¹Information regarding the Nepalese population of Bodpagaun is available in the report of Bernhard Muller, June, 1963, op. cit.

5. Summary

Social groups and religious values were factors of fundamental importance in the economic programs of the Bodpagaun Project. A communal field, which was to be the settlement's economic mainstay, was difficult to organize due to a schism between the two religious sects within the Tibetan population. The field was finally abandoned when further conflict arose between the local Nepalese and the Tibetans over sacred cows that strayed into the project's main agricultural plot. In the second of the project's two main economic programs, a dairy industry proved infeasible after the Nepalese in the area refused to buy the dairy's cheese, claiming that it had been ritually polluted. This attitude towards the cheese becomes understandable when we find that highly polluting untouchables were used as apprentices in the project's dairy station. Tibetan trading associations in Bodpagaun, some of which are united by religious bonds, demonstrate how social groups and religious values also served as positive factors in the development of the community. These trading associations acted as intermediary links between Bodpagaun and the southerly bazaar towns, thus functioning as vehicles for the diffusion of modern ideas and manufactured commodities into the Bodpagaun region.

PROGRAM OF DEVELOPMENT STUDIES

Discussion Papers

- No. 49 "Public Goods and Income Distribution: An Explanatory Comment" (1974), 17 pp., C.E. McLure, Jr.
- No. 50 "Education and Modernization in Zaire: A Case Study," Gaston V. Rimlinger.
- No. 51 "Rural Credit and Income Distribution in Colombia" (1974), 26 pp., Wayne R. Thirsk.
- No. 52 "The Short-run Burden of Taxes on the Turkish Agriculture in the Sixties," (1974), 41 pp., Marian Krzyzaniak and Süleyman Özmucur.
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- No. 61 "Noneconomic Factors in the Study of Economic Development" (1975), 33 pp., Robert Cartier.
- No. 62 "Social Groups and Religious Values as Factors in Economic Development: A South Asian Example" (1975), 25 pp., Robert Cartier.
- No. 63 "The Bodpagaun Project: A Case of Economic Development" (1975), 29 pp., Robert Cartier.

Note: Discussion Papers are available upon request to individual scholars and researchers and libraries of educational institutions.