

Spengen details the geopolitical history of Tibet up to the Chinese takeover in 1950. Trade between Tibet and Nepal was a keystone of the mountain and hill economy of Nepal until 1959, when the Chinese took over. He attempts to fathom the origins of the Manangi people, who appear to be related to the Gurung peoples to the south but preferred a sedentary agricultural lifestyle to the agropastoral of the Gurung. Spengen suggests they could not grow enough food to sustain themselves year-round because of insufficient labor. They turned to trading in the winter and were given special trading privileges by the Lamjung Raja (or king), probably for helping build his fort. Unlike most other traders in Nepal, this royal order granted trading privileges that have absented them from customs duties since 1784. This comparable advantage lasted until quite recently.

Spengen explores the history of their trade that reached many centers in Asia, as Manangba ranged far and wide, and led to considerable capital accumulation. The people of Manangba have become major entrepreneurs in Kathmandu and now maintain only a small presence in their homeland.

Most mountain wilderness has buffer zones around it inhabited by various peoples with varied livelihoods. Adaptability, chance, and foresight, especially to changing economic circumstances, have resulted in significant wealth creation among some groups, including these people of Nyishang. While most visitors to such regions

are unlikely to learn much about the ethnic groups' culture through which they travel, the outsider's experience is vastly enhanced by such understanding. The book represents one facet of cultural ecology found on one of the world's most impressive and tourist-visited mountain circuits. Those with an anthropological or geographic background will find it illuminating.

"There are travel writers and travel liars." Those with a professional background in these disciplines will question the reliability of some of the author's findings, given his rather brief stay in Nyishang collecting stories, his lack of any knowledge of local language, and his limited Nepali language skills. Most of the recent findings depend on the validity of the explanations of 1 interpreter who himself was not a Manangba and worked with a people in a language that was not their native tongue. The initial attempts to do interviews following a questionnaire format had to be abandoned for obvious reasons given that these people were seasoned smugglers. So we are left to rely on their memories of discussions reconstructed once they got home each evening. And there is little about modern times. The remainder of the material is from historical documents. These limitations aside, this book represents the best story yet on these resourceful people.

Stephen Bezruchka, MD
Seattle, WA, USA

Errata

In a collective review by E. Ben Welch and Barry J. Gales, "Use of stun guns for venomous bites and stings: a review," published in Issue 2, Volume 12, page 111, reference 29, the reference to Dr David L. Hardy, Sr, MD, was misprinted as "Harding." The reference citation, however, is correct. The authors and editors regret the error.

In a Letter to the Editor by Subhash C. Arya, "Disasters and therapeutic or prophylactic interventions," published in Issue 2, Volume 12, page 154, the references

were omitted. The editors regret the omission. The references are as follows:

1. Gdalevich M, Ashkenazi I. Infection control in earthquake rescue team. *Lancet*. 1999;354:1564.
2. Horton R. Croatia and Bosnia: the imprints of war—II. Restoration. *Lancet*. 1999;353:2223–2228.
3. *Physicians' Desk Reference*. 53rd ed. Montvale: Medical Economics Company; 1999.
4. Brown F, ed. *New Approaches to Stabilization of Vaccine Potency*. Basel: Karger; 1996.