

INTERVIEW

[This is the text of an interaction that Vinay Kumar Srivastava (VKS) had with Professor T.N. Pandey (TNP) of the University of California, Santa Cruz (California 95064), on 27 December 1988. VKS was then a doctoral student of social anthropology at the University of Cambridge, United Kingdom, and TNP was a visiting fellow at St. John's College, University of Cambridge. The interview was conducted in Cambridge at the residence of TNP. It is being reproduced here with TNP's consent.]

VKS : Professor Pandey, you did your first degree (M.A.) from Lucknow, and then you went to Chicago. What are your reminiscences of Lucknow at that time?

TNP : Lucknow was quite an interesting place when I was there. I arrived in Lucknow in 1959. I think that T.N. Madan had just returned from Australia, and K.S. Mathur had come a little bit earlier. D.N. Majumdar was Head of the Department. I think, Gopala Sarana was there, as was Ravindra Jain, and D.K. Sen was the second man after Majumdar. So, you can see that it was quite an exciting group of people. I was an undergraduate there, still, I was taught by Majumdar, and anyone who remembers Majumdar from that period will testify to what I am saying. Majumdar was really at the prime of his career, was doing very exciting work, and was in the middle of all kinds of researches, urban research, tribal research and rural research, and it was a great loss to anthropology that Majumdar died in May 1960. But Lucknow had quite a talented group of people, both in the faculty and the students who were around.

VKS : What has been the influence of Majumdar on your academic work and thinking?

TNP : In a way, I was too young to learn much from Majumdar. I know that he was a great man, but I didn't know much about anthropology at that point. But two or three things in Majumdar were quite important to me. One was Majumdar's knack of selecting exceptionally gifted students. Whatever else you say about Lucknow now, the Lucknow people are still doing very well. The Lucknow people, trained during Majumdar's time, are really doing quite good work, wherever they are, in India or abroad. And the other thing was, in retrospect now I think about it, that Majumdar was quite a successful teacher. He always came to the classroom in time and the personality of Majumdar was quite really mesmerizing to the undergraduates. He wore a funny

kind of dress, you know, and he had handkerchiefs in most of his pockets. One of the things I remember about Majumdar is that whatever he wore had plenty of pockets – may be four, six – and in each pocket, I think, he had one or two handkerchiefs. And most of the time he would take out handkerchiefs from different pockets to rub out the things he had written on the blackboard. He was not a very systematic teacher, or he was not a very well prepared teacher, but he always had something interesting to say about various topics. So, I think, Majumdar had the knack of attracting very bright students, and also, I think, those of us in the teaching profession remember how faithful and good a teacher Majumdar was, in instructing whatever he was supposed to instruct to his students.

VKS : It is generally said that there were three people in Lucknow at that time –D.P. Mukerji, R.K. Mukerjee and D.N. Majumdar— and they contributed to the building up of what is called the ‘Lucknow School’. After the departure of these ‘towering intellectuals’, the Lucknow School almost starting declining. Do you have any specific comments on the Lucknow School?

TNP : Well, in a way, I have heard a great deal about the Lucknow School. The only person who really taught me from those three was D.N. Majumdar. I know R.K. Mukerjee who was around, and I met D.P. Mukerji only once at Majumdar’s house. But among the three, I think from whatever my teachers who were their students tell us, D.P. Mukerji was perhaps the most brilliant, and Majumdar, I suppose, was the most studious among them. And R.K. Mukerjee was perhaps the best administrator. So, I think that it was really a nice group of scholars. Majumdar basically did ethnographic research, and went to various parts of India to conduct ethnographic surveys, R.K. Mukerjee who had done very good work in economics remained the Head of the Department for a very long time, and supervised various kinds of work the people at Lucknow were doing. But D.P. Mukerji, who was extremely urbane, was very well read, and he was also a very good novelist, and was a superb teacher, as everyone tells me now, because in the class-room, as well as out of it, he would spend tremendous amount of time in talking to students on various topics, not just sociology and anthropology. So, in a way, he was philosophically oriented, D.P. Mukerji was also some kind of a Marxist, Majumdar was empirically-oriented, and then the third one (R.K. Mukerjee) was, perhaps, a superb organizer and administrator. Lucknow people, of course, have their own opinions about the three giants of Lucknow School of Anthropology and Sociology, but in some respect, I personally feel that after them was such a tremendous gap between these ‘giants’ and the people who were educated by them.

There was such a gap between the two generations, so to say that one misses the kind of impact the contemporary people have made on their students, and one always remembers the kind of things R.K. Mukerjee, D.P. Mukerji and D.N. Majumdar did.

VKS : Why did you prefer to do your M.A. in social anthropology, because the kind of anthropology Majumdar propagated was an integrated one – both the disciplines of physical and social/cultural anthropology were attributed equal importance? Therefore an M.A. student in Lucknow would have had equal chances of choosing physical or social anthropology.

TNP : To some extent, I suppose, it is my upbringing. Coming from a traditional Brahminical background, I had very little training in biology, and in order to be a good physical anthropologist, one has to have a sound background in biology or geology. I had done some physics and chemistry but I was fascinated by the people. I was rather intrigued by whatever they had to say about the tribal communities. So, as a result, I suppose, I chose to do cultural/social anthropology.

VKS : How did you get an opportunity to go to Chicago? On which scholarship, funding?

TNP : In a way, it's a funny story. There were two Americans around in 1962. One was Joseph Elder, a sociologist from Wisconsin, who had come to do some research in Lucknow. And the other one was an undergraduate student. His name was Wilcox; he had come, I think, from Michigan, on some sort of an exchange programme. Wilcox lived in the same dormitory, in the same hostel, as I did, Narendra Dev Hall. He introduced me to Joseph Elder; so, I think, it was basically the presence of two Americans which made me take some notice of what American anthropologists were doing. The other American anthropologist I know was Harold Gould, a very good friend of T.N. Madan, who used to come to the Department quite frequently in the period I was there. And, in a way, by that time, it had become quite clear to us that American Anthropology was becoming quite influential. I had the possibility of coming either to Cambridge or going to Chicago. I wrote to Meyer Fortes and Edmund Leach at Cambridge, and to Fred Eggan at Chicago. Fred Eggan did not respond to my letter, but I heard both from Meyer Fortes and Edmund Leach. They suggested that since I was interested in working not in India, but in some other community, it would be better if I went to Chicago, and after that come to Cambridge. So what happened that I wrote letters – I still remember to these places, Chicago as well as Cambridge, in December 1962. In the latter part of December, we went to do some fieldwork among the Tharu with K.S. Mathur and

J.S. Bhandari. They were 20-22 students. And when we came back sometimes in early January 1963, I had not got any letter from anywhere. So, I wrote back to Chicago. At that time, I had decided that perhaps Chicago was the place I would like to go. I wrote back, and sometimes in February, I got reply from the Administrative Assistant to the Chairman that their dead-line was January 1st, but since I had written to them in December 1962, they had decided to send me a form, and if I returned it to them right away, they would consider me, and let me know. So, in the beginning of April, when I had not completed my M.A. examinations, I got a letter from the Dean of Graduate Studies at Chicago that I was given a fellowship of some three thousand dollars, and the rest amount was for subsistence/maintenance, which was sufficient to keep me for a year at Chicago. That's why I chose to go to Chicago.

VKS : You first said that you wanted to work in a community outside India, and finally you chose to work on the Zunis. Why did you want to work outside India, because most Indian anthropologists prefer to do their work in India, and you were perhaps one of the first ones from India to have worked in a community very different from your own, and also in a different context?

TNP : Well, by the time I was ready to do anthropology, Claude Lévi-Strauss's work had started to make an impact on the Indian colleagues. And I remember, at this point I can't recall, what I had read by him, but I do remember reading something by Lévi-Strauss which had appeared by that time, in which he maintained that anthropology was basically the perspective of the other, and even though, by that time, I had known something about the tribes in India, I felt that they were still part of our society. It was very difficult for us to think of our tribal people as 'the other'. So, I felt that if I could get on opportunity do anthropology elsewhere, why I should not do what British anthropologists and American anthropologists had done, that is, to choose to work in an alien culture. When I got an opportunity, this was precisely what I chose to do; I decided to work with the Navaho, and then I shifted to Zuni, and I also did some work with the Hopi. It was basically a conscious decision on my part to work in a context which was different from the Indian one.

VKS : What was your first field experience – as an anthropologist – with the Zuni?

TNP : Well, it was quite a devastating experience when I was working with Navaho. A fellow student from Michigan or Oregon, may be from Oregon, drove me to Zuni. I did not have a car; I didn't know how to drive at that point of time. So, this fellow, who was working with Navaho, one of its off-reservation groups, came to visit me. The Ramah

Navaho community was some 20 or 25 miles from the Zuni. And when we arrived at Zuni, we discovered that it was Sunday, and everything was closed. It was sometimes towards the last part of June, 1964, and we saw a group of masked figures emerging from the centre of the village, and going towards the other part. I had read something about it in Ruth Benedict's *Patterns of Culture*, and I was absolutely mesmerized that something like that would take place in 1964, in the middle of America. This man's name (who drove me to the Zuni land) was Leland. Both Leland and I thought about it, and we said that even though we didn't get anything to eat, since the stores were closed, we really got intellectually a very exciting feast, just to observe what we had read in anthropological books about Zuni, and there were times when I used to imagine that it would be wonderful if I got permission to work at Zuni. During those days, those people were not very hospitable to anthropologists, since the anthropologists had studied them over a long period of time, and they felt that they had been exploited by anthropologists. So, at that time, my sponsors, who were responsible for my fieldwork in the American South-west, felt that Zuni would be a difficult place to work, and as a result, even though I expressed my desire to work with them, there was not much support for it in the research team which had supported my fieldwork in 1964. But eventually, and I have written about it, you remember in my 'Indian-man among the American Indians', I met with the Commissioner for Indian affairs for the State of New Mexico, one Charles Minton, and he gave me introducing letters to the Governor of the Zuni tribe as well as to the Chief Tribal Judge, and with those two letters, I was taken by an F.B.I. agent, who introduced me to the Zuni Tribal Judge, since the Governor was out of town. And that Judge happened to be the husband of Flora Zuni, the anthropological informant of Kroeber's, Ruth Benedict's, Ruth Bunzel's, and Li An-Che's, and so many other anthropologists who had gone to Zuni. So, with that kind of recommendation, I was able to stay in Zuni for three months – July to September – and when I went back to Chicago, people were absolutely thrilled that the Zuni Indians would allow an anthropologist to stay with them for a couple of months, and my teachers in particular, Fred Eggan, David Schneider and Sol Tax, the experts on the American Indians, encouraged me to go back to the Zuni and pursue my anthropological fieldwork there. So, I went back there again in 1965 and stayed there for about eight months, and it was during that period that I decided to concentrate on Zuni politics for my Ph.D. research. Thereafter, I went back to Zuni for a period of four months, so by the time I wrote any Ph.D. thesis, I think, I had spent either fifteen or sixteen months with the Zuni. Since then, I have spent another 3 years with them.

VKS : How was the entire fieldwork?

TNP : The whole fieldwork, as you know, I have written about it both in my “Indian-man among the American Indians”, and “Anthropologist-informant relationship”, was quite difficult, but it was quite challenging. I could never take myself for granted. I knew that I was an outsider – I was an observer in their society – and as they had given a hard time to many anthropologists in the past, if I didn’t conform to the expectations they have of one, they could have very well asked me to leave the Reservation. And also, in comparison to other anthropologists, Kroeber or Benedict or Bunzel, or others, after all I was an outsider. I was a citizen of India. So, in that respect, I knew that nobody would really come to help me. It was only my own work there which would help me, because I had very little contact in American society, I could not have actually relied on an American to sponsor me there, or help me, because they (the Zuni) did not have much trust in white Americans. So, in that respect, I was there more or less on my own, and over a period of time, I was able to develop rapport with the people. In particular, women of the Zuni society, because it is a matrilineal society and also a matrilocal society, and it was sheer good luck that I was able to develop this contact with Flora Zuni, who was a very important member of the tribe, and also came from a very important family in Zuni. It was largely my native sponsorship – sponsorship in Zuni by some of the leading members of the Zuni society – that established my credentials as an anthropologist in Zuni, and also because of my temperament, and in my personal opinion I don’t consider myself a very aggressive person, and the Zuni don’t like very aggressive people. So, in their perception, most of the Americans who came there were very aggressive; they were always asking questions; they were always demanding responses. While I observed most of the time, and then once in a while, I asked questions about certain things, and then when I established contact there, only after that I started to ask questions on the topics, on the subjects, in which I was interested. So, I think, to some extent, it was my own personality as well as my way of doing field work, which enabled me to succeed in Zuni, despite the fact that it had been a very difficult community for anthropologists to work with.

VKS : A little while ago you mentioned that anthropologists study the ‘other cultures’, and you were influenced by the writings of Lévi-Strauss. Do you still hold this view that anthropologists study the ‘other cultures’?

TNP : In a way, now the whole context in which anthropology is done is very different, because this insider-outsider business is still important, but to some extent, it really depends on how one is going to conduct one’s field work. I know in the context of India, Srinivas and others

have mentioned that Indian society is so diverse and so complex that one can get that kind of experience even at home in India. I have thought about it, because during the last four years, I spent almost a year and half in the North-East, which is one of the tribal belts of India, but in some respects, I personally feel that working in Zuni was a very different kind of an experience, because there I knew that I was there at their mercy, and as I really wanted to succeed, I must develop a kind of contact with them, which would give me a base in their society. Also I knew that the kind of contact I developed there would really affect the quality of data I collected, and also, it would really enable the people who followed me to see what kind of a field worker I'd been there. The basic thing is that if you are really going to work in an alien culture, which is different from your own, then you really cannot take anything for granted. You are really curious about everything and to some extent that kind of knowledge you are going to acquire will be determined by the kind of people who would become your informants, and the kind of rapport you would be able to build with them. Once you're working in your society, you'll really never forget that it's your society, and if I can reflect upon my experience, when I was staying in the North-East, there I was quite conscious of my own position in my society, and whether I was talking to the Khasi or the Garo or the Mizo, it was very difficult for me to assume the same kind of position towards them as I had assumed towards the Zuni when I was doing my field work there. So, in some respects, because there in India, whether it is in Central India, or wherever, I always know that I come from a privileged kind of background it's difficult to make myself totally dependent on the people as I was in the context of Zuni. So, to some extent, working in an alien culture gives you a very different kind of ambience, a very different kind of experience, equally challenging, may be perhaps more challenging, but it is bound to be a different kind of experience, and the kind of knowledge you're really going to acquire, or create, is again going to be somewhat different from the kind of knowledge you really created in the context of working in an alien culture. So, from my point of view and let me speak from my experience and perspective, there is a difference between working in one's own culture, and working in another culture, both of them are legitimate enterprises, and one cannot say that one is deserving, and the other is not. But in traditional anthropology, it was expected of an anthropologist to develop a kind of consciousness in the context of another culture; now, for all kind of reasons, that has broken down for good, or for bad, but if one can experience field work in another culture, I think one should do it, because it really is a unique kind of experience, a kind of experience which has been the hallmark of western anthropology.

- VKS** : Since the context of Indian society and culture has come I would like to ask you two questions, and I think they are inter-related. The first is: What do you think of Indian anthropology? And here I am mainly confining myself to Indian social-cultural anthropology. My second question deals with the debate between sociology and social anthropology. You know that people like Srinivas and André Béteille do not make a distinction between them, on the other, there are anthropologists, for instance Gopala Sarana, who do not agree with Srinivas and Béteille and they believe that sociology is one thing and social anthropology is another. I would like to know your comments on both of them – your views on Indian anthropology – and the academic, intellectual and administrative relationship between sociology and social anthropology.
- TNP** : As you know these are all fascinating questions, and I have thought about them time and again. In a way the distinction between anthropology and sociology is basically a colonial distinction – it is cultural distinction, rooted in the Western experience. In the Indian context, I do see some merit in maintaining the distinction between anthropology and sociology, but philosophically, if one follows the kind of distinctions which people maintain in Europe as well as in America, then the distinction between anthropology and sociology really becomes superfluous in the context of India. The distinction between anthropology and sociology, to some extent, has helped sociology, and has really done a little bit of harm to anthropology, here I am speaking as an outsider, although, of course, I am an Indian, and I am very conscious of my identity as an Indian anthropologist. The way the things are in India, people who want to do social and human sciences, and if they are bright, they end up doing economics, or history, and if not these, they think of doing sociology. My personal feeling is that, and I hope I'm wrong in it, the kind of people who have come to do anthropology are basically the left-over; they are not really the kind of people who have gone to do economics, or history or sociology. The people we have attracted to do anthropology are basically not bright people, and I'm not judgmental, I am not saying that it's good or bad. I'm only saying that it has proved somewhat disastrous for anthropology in India, because the talented people who might have made a difference to the practice of social and cultural anthropology in India, end up going to the sociology department, and what they are doing there basically is social and cultural anthropology, but they are doing it under the guise of sociology. As a result, social/cultural anthropology, whatever you prefer to call it, has suffered in the last two decades in India, and sociology has flourished. In certain contexts, I do see some merit in maintaining the distinction between anthropology and sociology; but in other contexts, like in the context

of India, it is basically superfluous; there is so much overlap between them that I don't see much gain in maintaining the distinction.

VKS : This brings me to another question regarding Indian Anthropology or anthropology as a whole. Some say that it is not one subject, but a 'group of subjects', and this has led to the 'identity crisis'; the kind of work that goes on, for example, in physical anthropology, is something not comprehensible to the social anthropologist, and vice versa. In this light, some say that anthropology should be divided into different departments, as is the pattern in Cambridge. Physical anthropology, much allied to medical sciences and Zoology should go in one direction, and should not be clubbed together in the same department as social anthropology is. At the same time, some are trying to keep the department of anthropology as an integrated whole. Would you like to say something about the 'identity crisis' in the discipline of anthropology?

TNP : As you know, in your department, in Delhi Department, I spoke about this identity crisis in 1984. This was one of the points I made there. There are two models about this: one is the American model, and the other is the European model. In most of the European universities, in particular, British universities, right from the very beginning, there was not much overlap between physical anthropology, archaeology, and social anthropology. Social anthropology was a distinct, separate subject, from archaeology, as well as physical anthropology. And in the American context, right from the time of Boas and Kroeber, they went for an integrated approach to anthropology, i.e. they maintained that anthropologists were interested in man and his works, so to say. They were interested in the origin of man, evolution of man, in the things human beings create, material culture and archaeological things, the speech patterns, languages spoken by man, as well as in the kind of symbols and the other markers of our humanness, so to say. Americans took a much broader view of our disciplines than the Europeans, and they also had the resources to do it. Almost every major department in America went for an integrated approach to anthropology, that is the study of culture, language, race, and material aspects, to that has been added demography in certain departments. There are four or five sub-disciplines of anthropology represented.

The second part of your question is quite interesting. I have talked with many of my friends in cultural anthropology in the U.S.A. and they say that if they are doing demography, they have more in common with demographers and sociologists, than with their colleagues in other branches of anthropology. At the level of teaching, I still feel that one has to introduce graduate and post-graduate students to the

different fields (or sub-fields) of anthropology, but at the level of research, I do see some merit in allowing people to have liaison, or alliance, with cooperate fields, whether they are in humanities or other social sciences, or even in natural sciences. These disciplines, as we know them, were formed either in the 18th or the 19th century, and now in the latter part of the 20th century, the boundaries that separated these disciplines have been loosened, and as a result now the kind of rigidity we have imposed on our disciplines in India does not make much sense.

VKS : I want to ask you a personal question. I am asking this question to senior anthropologists, especially those who are giving a direction to the subject: Who is your favorite anthropologist?

TNP : Well, one's favourite anthropologist is really determined by one's area of interest, or research. Since I am basically interested in the American Indian material, I read anthropologists who work on the American Indians. And as a result, it's difficult to say about one person who is my favorite anthropologist. I am reading both older and younger people in anthropology. So, it will be unfair for me to say that I have one favourite anthropologist. I have so many favorites whose work I admire: Eggan, Schneider, Geertz, among them.

VKS : Is there an anthropologist who has exercised a lot of influence on your thinking, ideas? Or, to ask you a related question: As I see, you must be a very popular teacher. Is there any teacher of yours who has influenced you in terms of your teaching style?

TNP : Well, three or four people whom I admired at Chicago when I was a student there were Fred Eggan, my supervisor, David Schneider, and Lloyd Fallers, a political anthropologist, who had worked in Africa, and Milton Singer. Fred Eggan was not very good in the classroom. He was a very shy person. In the classroom, he more or less kept his eyes glued to his notes, even when he had been teaching the same subject for some 35 or 40 years. At that point, the most energetic person was David Schneider, because he was a very clear and humorous lecturer. He had a good sense of humour, and made biting comments about other anthropologists. But Eggan was very good in individual discussions, whenever I read something, and went to discuss with him he was very incisive and very good. I admired Fallers for both his humanity and his anthropology since I was doing political anthropology and he was the main political anthropologist at Chicago. He was a very decent human being – the compassion and care he took, the interest he took in every student, even though I was working with the Zuni, and he did not know much about them. But still he would listen to the kind of things I was saying, the kind of things I

had read, and once in a while, he would also make some comments. Singer, a very well read man and a student of India and not of American Indians, was a very good teacher in the seminars. He would summarize the writings as well as the theoretical statements of various anthropologists. He would prepare marvelous summary statements about the kind of things we discussed in classrooms. Clifford Geertz had just started to become famous when I was a student at Chicago. I took two courses with him and he was a very different kind of a teacher. He was basically a researcher, and when he came to the class-room, he would read his papers or chapters from his books, which he was writing. But, again, he was doing very exciting work, and it was very good for we – the students – to listen to the kind of things he was saying. Those were the teachers, whom I remember from my student days at Chicago, and they all had something interesting to say, but all were doing different things, and that was the strength of the Chicago department. In that Department, there was support for a diversity of approaches. We students were exposed to people doing different kinds of things, in different parts of the world.

VKS : Which piece of advice you would like to give to the new people coming in anthropology, at the research level, at the level of theory and practice.

TNP : It's always a difficult thing for an anthropologist to give advice to another anthropologist, because, so long as we remain field-oriented, data-oriented, the field we select, the kind of knowledge we create, to some extent, is dependent upon who we are, what our interests are, what our values are, what our goals are, so in that respect what worked for me may not work for another student of anthropology. But, in a way, anthropology has become a very exciting field now, as it was when it started, because, as I told earlier, it is a much more open discipline now than it was two or three decades ago, and now people from history, literature, sociology, or other disciplines, are coming to anthropology for the kind of things they are doing. My advice to somebody coming to anthropology is that he or she should have a very good introduction to some of these disciplines in the humanities. He or she should have good introduction to some philosophical works, some literary things, and also, in a way, how to think about certain things. A course in logic or philosophy, or something like that, is very important. So, anthropology, to some extent, is a truly inter-disciplinary subject; anthropology builds bridges to other disciplines, and in that sense, it is the most inter-disciplinary of all the inter-disciplinary studies we have. In that respect, if one is coming to anthropology from a different discipline,

be that history, sociology, literature, philosophy, then that person may be able to interlink his or her earlier interests with the kind of thing he or she would be doing in anthropology. Anthropologists, right from the early years, from the times of Malinowski, Boas, Radcliffe-Brown, Fortes, Geertz, and others, have done that they have combined their earlier interests, be in philosophy, literature, languages, psychology, economics, with the kind of things they have in anthropology. One who is coming to anthropology should not be very rigid in approach; should be somewhat open; and should have some understanding of logic, philosophy, or literature or history.

VKS : What are your academic engagements these days?

TNP : Well, I'm still trying to make some sense of my Zuni work and my recent interest in the tribal parts of the North-East India. At the moment, I'm thinking about the tribal situation in India, and in a couple of months I shall put together a short book on the tribes in India. And I shall come back to completing the life history of Flora Zuni, which I began a couple of years ago. I have something like 200 odd pages, and if I have another 100 pages or so, it will make a nice 300 page book. My two immediate projects are to finish a book on the tribal minorities in India as well as complete the life history of Flora Zuni.

VKS : Since you mentioned the word 'life history', may I ask you your comment on the recent debate that anthropology is some kind of an autobiography?

TNP : My work is relevant to this debate, and many have used it. So long as human beings are studying other human beings, there is no way that they can really transcend their humanness, so to say, unlike physicists, chemists, or astronomers, the questions like 'who we are', 'what kind of values do we have', 'what kind of interests we have', affect the kind of work which my colleagues are doing, it is quite clear that we should not overdo it, as Marilyn Strathern and others, are telling us, but one should not also try to do what had Radcliffe-Brown or what Boas did, they totally neglected the role they were playing in the society they were studying, and just bring in what they were really learning from the natives about their culture. That is, the context in which the knowledge they were creating was quite important, and one has to have some understanding of that context as well. I have said, time and again, that every text is created in a context, and there is a dialectical relationship between them.

VKS : We, in India, really miss you. Do you have any plans of joining any Indian university?

TNP : I miss India too. I have remained Indian in every way, as you can see. But when I was really thinking of settling down in India, in the early 1970s, and if things had worked out, I would have remained in India. I had every intention of settling down there. But, somehow I was not very happy in the way the Indian society was going, and the way in which the Indian departments were run. So, as a result, I decided to come back to the west. First I came to Cambridge, and then, I went back to America. But two comments, two different people made, are still fresh for me. One was from my teacher at Chicago, Fred Eggan, and the other was from Fortes, whom I immensely admired. They both said that, "Look Loki, whether you decide to remain in India, or in the west, you will remain what you are". Fortes said, "You are too much of an internationalist to be happy in India, and you are too much of an Indian to be happy anywhere else". Over a period of time, when I thought that I have removed myself out of India, and with time and again, I did not like. I would have liked to remain in India, but then in the last few years, I have come back to India quite often. I have done some teaching at Delhi and mostly at Shillong. So, my role in the next few years, or next few decades, if I live that long, is quite clear: I would like to remain where I am, in the west, and come back to India, periodically to teach as well as to spend some time there. Luckily, since I have a family from India that also gives me an opportunity to do that.

VKS : What are your other interests besides anthropology?

TNP : Well, I 'm taking care of my son, Alok. I have spent quite a bit of time doing anthropology and otherwise I enjoy gardening, taking care of my house in Santa Cruz, since I have been on my own for a very long time. I enjoy walking, talking to friends, but I don't have that many interests outside anthropology.