

## Fulbright grant gives instructor Nepal year

By Sigrid Peltz

Dr. Robert H. Stoddard, associate professor of geography, is leaving for a kingdom in the Himalayas where the villagers still talk of the Yeti, an abominable snowman.

The University of Nebraska-Lincoln (UNL) instructor received a Fulbright-Hays Lectureship Award to teach at Tribhuvan University in Katmandu, Nepal. About the size of Nebraska, Nepal is wedged between India and the People's Republic of China.

Stoddard said Nepal is a relatively new country to the world. With uneducated citizens and foreigners banned, autocratic rulers isolated the nation until 1950, he said. "Consequently," he said, "it is one of the least developed nations in the world."

### Rapid change

Rapid change describes the past 25 years as the kingdom tries to modernize, he said.

Stoddard said he will be teaching quantitative techniques to graduate students and a Tribhuvan faculty member. When he leaves after a year, he said, the faculty member will be able to continue the course.

By using statistics, quantitative techniques help answer the geographical question of why something should be located where it is.

### Social Geography

Stoddard said he works primarily in social, rather than physical geography. As examples, physical geography questions why a volcano is in a certain place and social

wonders about the location of a shopping center.

While helping to develop a new curriculum at the Asian institute, Stoddard said he may also aid with research projects which "take inventory of the physical and social resources" of Nepal.

Language will not be a problem because "English is the medium in which all graduate level courses are taught," he said. Stoddard added that he probably will take Nepali lessons.

### University like UN-L

With 20,000 students, the University is similar to UN-L in size. The educational system, with grades based on papers, projects and hour exams, resembles American schools, he said. This differs with the previously used British system which grades by exams taken after a lengthy period such as a semester, he said.

Stoddard said this is an example of the new attitude in Nepal. During its isolation education was only for the elite, he said. With the new government, an education plan was introduced which specified that education should benefit everyone.

### Government criticizes

By accepting this idea and using U.S. education methods the government is criticizing, not outrightly, the educational elites created by British education, he said.

"In our country where we are used to public education, the point doesn't seem so great," he said, but in other countries where only a few are educated, the idea is revolutionary.

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