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Please address your questions and information about meetings of interest to the Nepal Studies Association's Conference Coordinator:

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### CONFERENCE ABSTRACTS

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#### Annual Meeting, American Academy of Religion Orlando, Florida November 21-24, 1998

##### **Tang Princess Wen Cheng Kongjo's Religio-Political Roles**

Elisabeth Benard  
*University of Puget Sound*

I propose to examine the religio-political applications of East Tibetan sites associated with the Tang princess, Wen Cheng Kongjo. She is associated with three pilgrimage sites in East Tibet. These are Sun Moon Mountain in Amdo, Bidu near Jyekundo and Dan Ma Brag near Jyamdung in Kham. Sun Moon Mountain has become a tourist site for Chinese whereas the Kham sites remain religious places. In this presentation I would like to compare these three sites which reveal different perspectives of Wen Cheng Kongjo. I shall illustrate how Tibetans have viewed Wen Cheng over the centuries by focusing on these three sites and contrasting these viewpoints with the present Chinese interpretations of Wen Cheng's role in Tibet. The Tibetans continue to view Wen Cheng foremost as an emanation of Tara whereas the Chinese stress her political role of a Chinese princess.

##### **Tibetan Nativism and the Quest for Indigenous Bon**

Zeff Bjerken  
*University of Michigan, Ann Arbor*

One of the consequences of the recent Chinese colonization of Tibet has been the emergence of the new national identity for Tibetans, which is most evident in Tibetan diaspora communities. Faced with the threat of cultural annihilation or assimilation by the Chinese, the Dalai Lama and his government-in-exile have been busy forging a nationalist ethos based on Tibetan Buddhism.

However, there are a few contemporary Tibetan historians who have boldly voiced their dissent, taking strong exception to the identification of Tibetan national identity with Buddhism. These scholars locate the source of their distinctive and enduring identity in Tibet's pre-Buddhist history, and especially in the "indigenous" religion of Bon. Their "nativist" historiography celebrates Bon as the basis for the achievements of the glorious Yarlung dynasty, and Buddhism is often designated as the foreign "other" in order to construct a genuine Tibetan identity based on Bon. This paper will identify some of the general contours of this nativist historiography, especially in the work of Samten Karmey and Namkhai Norbu, whose scholarship has been influenced by (and influential upon) western Tibetology and Bon studies. The paper will conclude with an assessment of some western scholars' reactions to (and even appropriation of) this nativist quest for Tibet's religious and cultural origins.

##### **Gser-mdog pan-chen's Critique of Tsong-kha-pa's Madhyamaka: A Contribution to the Intellectual History of Tibet**

Paul B. Donnelly  
*University of Wisconsin, Madison*

Tsong-kha-pa Blo-bzang grags-pa (1357-1719) was one of the most significant intellectual figures in the history of Tibetan Buddhism. The Dga'-Idan of Dge-lugs sect was formed around his teachings and personality. His works on Madhyamaka philosophy are particularly noted as among his greatest achievements by the Dge-lugs tradition, but his position on Madhyamaka was a source of controversy outside of this sect.

One of his most vociferous critics was the fifteenth-century scholar Gser-mdog pan-chen Sakya mchog-Idan. Gser-mdog pan-chen attacked Tsong-kha-pa's understanding of Madhyamaka based largely on what he perceived as an unwarranted synthesis of conflicting trends of Buddhist thought. This paper will examine and evaluate some of Gser-mdog pan-chen's criticisms which the author believes is essential to developing an understanding of the intellectual history of Tibet, particularly in the century after Tsong kha-pa when there was a veritable explosion of scholarly activity.

### **A Tantric Synthesis of Buddha-Nature and Pure Lands**

David Germano  
*University of Virginia*

This paper will explore the nature of the most important intellectual and contemplative tantric Buddhist synthesis to develop under the rubric of the Great Perfection (*rdzogs chen*) in eleventh and twelfth-century Tibet. I will argue that it is distinctive in its treating Buddhist tantra as a vehicle for systematic philosophical discourse, and that in particular it is based on an innovative synthesis of tathagatagarbha literature and the unfolding of sambhogakaya pure lands out of the dharmakaya. In doing so, I will reveal how it is centered on an unusual tantric contemplative practice involving spontaneous images, and how it constitutes the original matrix of developments in post-mortem accounts that are now famous as the so-called **Tibetan Book of the Dead**.

### **Representations of the Religious in Modern Tibetan Literature**

Lauran R. Hartley  
*Indiana University*

Though most Tibetan literature might be characterized as "explicitly religious," Cabezon and Jackson (1996) remind us that "even at the height of Buddhist monastic dominance in Tibet, secular works continued to be composed among the less-educated laity," and clerics were "by no means restricted to writing on purely religious subjects." Today, the secular plays a significant if not dominant role in Tibetan publishing, particularly within contemporary literature and "New Poetry" (Bhum, forthcoming; Stoddard, 1994). Accordingly, Tibetan society has witnessed "the centre of [its] ethnic memory and experience shifting from the temple and its priesthood to the university and its scholarly community." (Smith, 1986) Notwithstanding, many Tibetan intellectuals were schooled by religious teachers "rehabilitated" after the Cultural Revolution. What literary representations of religion have appeared in the milieu?

This paper discusses religious allusions, characters, and imagery in modern Tibetan literature and how these

elements may help deepen our understanding of secularizing trends.

### **Rhetorical Dimensions of Longchenpa's gnas lugs mdzod**

Gregory A. Hillis  
*University of Virginia*

This paper will examine Longchenpa's (klong chen pa, 1308-1363) provocative and innovative language as it is found in his important work **Abiding Reality** (*gnas lugs rin po che'i mdzod*). It will argue that **The Treasury of Abiding Reality's** dense, polysemic language is informed by, and situated in, complex intersections of historical and discursive fields. It will focus in particular on the text's rigorous application of juridical themes and metaphors, and will suggest that these reflect elements of Longchenpa's personal biography. The paper will analyze the text from a rhetorical point of view, concentrating on its stylistic dimension as well as its ability to persuade. It will employ historical, literary, and religious strategies in its analysis of the text's language. In its historical interpretation, it will focus on issues of biography, legal codes, and social history; concerning stylistics, it will concentrate on the text's effective content in terms of literary strategies, hermeneutics, theory, etc.; and in its religious interpretations of the text's language, it will examine doctrinal and symbolic systems, as well as possible inversions and recontextualizations of these systems.

### **Luminous Ground and Dark Energy: The Chiaroscuro of Tibetan Tantric Traditions**

Matthew T. Kapstein  
*University of Chicago*

The Bka'-brgyud school, founded in the 11th century, emphasized a system of Tantric yoga in which the experience of "clear light" was of central importance, and is identified with the fundamental ground of being. The propensities that give rise to the diversity of mundane experience are seen as originating in a primordial movement within the original ground, a movement thematized as "dark energy." The dialectic of light and darkness as a matter of doctrinal speculation, and a focal point of yogic practice, is the first topic to be surveyed here. Second, the presentation will turn to contemporaneous developments within the "Great Perfection" tradition of the Rnying-ma school, which emphasizes visionary experience within a field of light, while the primal light itself may be received as "darkness" in some contexts. Contrasting these two facets of Tibetan Buddhism, we see that common, or closely similar, phenomenological contents of experience are shaped and made distinctive by the metaphors that are used to describe them.

## Representing Tibetan Religion in Hollywood and Cyberspace

Frank J. Kororn

Museum of International Folk Art

Hollywood has played an important role in the mystification of Tibetan religion and culture ever since Frank Capra's 1937 hit *Lost Horizon*. The film, based on the 1933 novel by James Hilton, portrays Tibet as a romanticized and harmonious place of beauty and serenity, where people live incredibly long life spans, harbor magical powers, and embody a serenity difficult for a Westerner to achieve. This perception is based primarily on a view of the mystical nature of Tibetan religions. While this image was already current in European perceptions of Tibet for at least a century prior to the movie's release, *Lost Horizon*, brought an imagined Tibet into focus for the American population. Although Tibet was to appear on the silver screen sporadically in the decades after the release of *Lost Horizon*, it was not until 1997 that Hollywood once again moved into the spotlight as a peddler of images pertaining to Tibet's spiritual culture. In 1997 two major movies about Tibet were released, both of which focus on Tibetan religion's transformative power: Jean-Jacques Annaud's *Seven Years in Tibet*, based on the life of Austrian adventurer Heinrich Harrer, and Martin Scorsese's *Kundun*, based on the life of the current Dalai Lama prior to the Chinese occupation of Tibet in 1959. In addition, a number of independent films and one on the CIA's involvement with rebels from eastern Tibet, starring Steven Seagal, will saturate the media exposure that Tibet has been receiving in recent years.

The aim of this paper is to analyze the numerous discourses concerning Hollywood and Tibet that appeared in a flurry of articles and reviews during the summer and fall of 1997. My ultimate goal is to evaluate just what sort of effects such exposure has on Tibetan religion and culture in a diaspora. Based on interviews with Tibetan actors and American viewers, film reviews, popular literature, and Internet coverage, I wish to suggest that the postmodern reception of Tibet by filmgoers has been mixed, resulting in numerous perceptions and interpretations of Tibet. At the same time, an ongoing discourse about the Tibet question continues on the Internet. I would further like to explore how the combined effect of electronic and celluloid media have been used as mass-mediated tools

for the "Free Tibet" movement. My conclusion calls for critical re-evaluation of the role of media in the contemporary politics of representation.

## *Kundun*: A Collaboration of Myth and History

Amy Lavine

*University of Chicago*

*Kundun*, released in 1997, represents a unique collaboration between two accomplished American film makers and the leader of the Tibetan people, His Holiness the Dalai Lama. The film can be understood as a devotional icon created by the Western producers of its images in conjunction with the Tibetans who were involved in its production. As an icon, the film also plays a role in the lives of its Tibetan audiences living in exile. As a contribution to the emergence of post-industrial mythography, the film is a complex integration of mythic thematics within a historico-documentary frame. This paper focuses on the intersection of myth and history in *Kundun* as enacted in its cinematography, editing, musical score, and narrative elements. It also reports on the observations of a Tibetan diaspora audience concerning the impact the film may be having on their own sense of identity.

## *Blessed by Virgins: Regal Mysticism and the Maintenance of Power within Nepala-mandala*

Jeffrey S. Lidke

*University of California, Santa Barbara*

Each year, during the festival of Indra Jatra, the King of Nepal seeks the ritual blessing of the virgin Kumari, Nepal's living Goddess. The initiates of Nepal's esoteric traditions perceive the Kumari's blessing as a ratification not only of the King's skill as head of state, but his success as a mystic. Rooted in a rich history of regal ascetic practice, this annual ritual enacts the belief that the Kumari is the King's own divine self, reflected outwardly as his goddess-in-residence. Through her blessings, the Kumari certifies that the King's qualification to rule Nepal resides in his ability to understand, harness, and govern the powers of his own soul. In this way, she ritually declares that the Nepalese institution of kingship is informed by a mystico-political doctrine that links the powers and practices of the King's body with those of the body politic.

**Annual Meeting, American Anthropological Association  
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania December 2-6, 1998**

**State Secularisms and Participatory Buddhist Bodies in the Tibetan Autonomous Region**

Vincanne Adams  
*Princeton University*

Twentieth-century agendas for social liberation have produced at least two particularized forms of secularism that both find effects in the Tibetan Autonomous Region. One is based on post-Maoist state policies of dialectical materialism and state socialism. The other arrives as a related form of scientific and technological modernization but attached to ideas about free-market capitalism and development aid. Both offer ideological arguments, however elusive about the place of religion in social life. This research explores the ways that these agendas have found their way into experiences and desires for progress among Tibetans who consider themselves Buddhist in contemporary Lhasa, Tibetan Autonomous Region. The focus of this essay is analyzing how a Buddhist epistemology grounded in lay Buddhist perspectives can offer insights on the forms and experiences of modernization that are as yet undertheorized in anthropology. The research focus is on practices of traditional Tibetan medicine, wherein patients and healers find themselves having to negotiate secularist modernization, religions preservationism, and cultural revitalization at times of sickness and in seeking courses of therapy. How these are negotiated and how the tensions these negotiations produce are resolved by Tibetans in forms of participation and self-transformation are the data of this presentation. The argument is that a study of Tibetan medical and social tactics and effects can generate methodological insights that offer critiques of existing liberatory agendas emerging from both materialist forms of socialism and the scientifically grounded development of liberalization capitalism.

**Feminist Tourists and Developing Women: A Transnational Transformation of Women's Development in Nepal**

Coralynn V. Davis  
*University of Michigan*

International development programs concerning "women's empowerment" customarily focus on the oppressive relation between women and men of the same culture of community. Similarly, the assumption of the centrality of gender to the empowerment of "third world" women contributes to a feminist notion of "global sisterhood" promoted by relatively privileged women on an international scale. In contrast, this paper examines the uneasy confluence of feminism, tourism and "third world development," with an eye toward

women's development as a site (or attraction) ripe for liberal Western feminist and tourist consumption. The internationally funded Janakpur Women's Development Center provides a group of Maithil women of the eastern Terai region of Nepal with the resources and space to make paintings and crafts for sale in tourist and export markets, by drawing on the same skills they use to make temporary paintings on the walls of their homes as an integral part of locally celebrated festivals. The dual charter of the project is to preserve the Maithil painting tradition (in the face of modernizing forces) and to empower poor Maithil women. My paper demonstrates how the evolution of the project into a tourist destination for international, leisure-class feminists has led Maithil project participants to perform their own versions of women's development. This strategy displays a sophisticated understanding of political and economic relations among women and effects a subtle critique of those relations.

**Body, Speech, Status: Ethnopragmatic Sensibilities Among Nepal's Yolmo People**

Robert Desjarlais  
*Sarah Lawrence University*

Among Yolmo wa or "Yolmo people" of north central Nepal, bodies figure prominently in communicative practices, social relations, and the maintenance of political hegemonies. Bodily movements, engagements and disengagements of vision, nods of one's head and uses of one's hands and torso; the pitch and pace of voice, locations in space when seated, standing or walking; these and other forms of embodied action intersect in highly significant ways with local, politically charged dynamics of gender, age, status, and honor. Intrinsic to all such intersubjective engagements are subtle ethnopragmatic sensibilities which themselves tie into what might best be called a tacit aesthetics of everyday life. By living and talking through such engagements and sensibilities, one might be able to convey something of the concerns and actions of various Yolmo wa, and so offer a counterportrait to accounts of discursive practices that often give priority to seemingly disembodied words and ideologies.

**When We Left Without the Yaks: Tibetan Exile Histories and International Tourism**

Jacqueline Fewkes  
*University of Pennsylvania*

The small town of Dharamsala, located in the Indian state of Himachal Pradesh, might at first glance seem like the unlikely focal point of international attention. Yet numerous tourists from various nations pass

through here each year, often prompted by pop icons such as Richard Gere and the Beastie Boys to become involved with the "Tibetan cause." In the case of Tibetan exile communities, the identification as displaced persons with internationally contested history has become a global commodity.

History is an integral part of the tourist trade in Dharamsala: personal histories are shared by the exiled hosts to their foreign guests, and representations of the past are sold to tourists in the form of illustrations on postcards and bumper stickers. In this paper the process of producing history as a commodity is explored through the comparison of Tibetan life histories, popular accounts of exile journeys, government sponsored tourist literature, and souvenir objects available in the Dharamsala marketplace. These vehicles of Tibetan history have become significant in forming an etic concept of Tibetan identity, which is then projected globally in the realm of international politics.

One of the most common perceptions of such representations of history is that they are exclusionary in nature. Yet, the Tibetan example illustrates how the process of commoditization creates histories which can simultaneously be both multivocal, and exclusionary, accounts of the past.

### **Separating Politics and Religion in Modern Tibet**

Ethan D. Goldings  
*Trace Foundation*

The complex and shifting relationship between Religion and Politics in contemporary Tibetan society challenges us to investigate these categories and their formation. A separation of spiritual and temporal power may appear as a natural, universal and inevitable process of modernity. Nevertheless, by focusing on the dividing practices at work in the creation and re-creation of religion and politics as apparently independent domains of social activity we recapture the sense that things might be otherwise. In doing so, we may better understand the power of dynamics of the social production of meanings in a type of epistemic shift: the disenchantment of the world. By contrasting life histories of both monks and lay people from Kham, with distancing accounts of the traditional comingling of religious and political affairs, this paper sets out to examine the extent to which CHOS (usually glossed as religion) was a far more embracing and encompassing concept in living memory than in some contemporary social practice. Whether in conflict over financial resources or struggles around language usage the debate over Religion as "the really real" versus "superstition" continues to be fought out in multiple fora: political ritual and public spectacle, state sponsored and community institution, social and individual daily practice. By studying these I hope we may better

understand some of the moods and motivations of Tibetans living both in China and in exile.

### **Transcendence in Shamanic Soundings**

David H. Holmberg  
*Cornell University*

Journeys are elementary to practices anthropologists think of as "shamanic"; in fact, travelling to otherwise inaccessible domains is integral to shamanic authority in many societies and certainly among Tibeto-Burman speaking populations of the Nepal Himalayas. Among the Tamang, shamanic practices are framed as journeys. During household rituals or soundings, Tamang shamans (bombo) launch themselves into hidden heavens (literally "going into the divine") where they "unveil" the faces of the divine or recapture lost shadow souls. In such household rituals, shamans attain the heavens through recitative movements to the high ranges of the Himalayas from whence they enter gates of hidden heavens and revelatory consciousness. On pilgrimage, shamans lead villagers over trails to the very seats of divinities. This paper argues that spatial and social transcendence, in some anthropological rhetorics deconstruction, is integral to the meanings of shamanic practice. Shamanic transcendence though can not be understood outside of a relation with everyday social forms and experience. The most systematic treatment of such ritual transcendences has been in the work of Victor Turner, yet this paper argues not for "antistructure" as the defining characteristics of these transcendent suspensions. Rather, transcendence is integral to structuration and transcendence is associated with shamanic mastery and control which ultimately work toward the production and reproduction of Tamang social life.

### **Cultural Construction of Reproductive Health Among Garhwali Peasants**

Satish Kedia  
*Western Illinois University*

This paper focuses on culturally constructed behaviors and practices that regulate reproductive health among Garhwali women of the Central Himalayan region in North India. Reproductive health refers to women's ability to reproduce and control their fertility, pregnancy, and its outcome in terms of both maternal and child health. High incidences of mortality and morbidity involving a wide range of common diseases to more complicated gynecological problems and malnutrition among pregnant women have been widely reported throughout India and South Asia. Reproductive health among Garhwali peasants is determined by a number of factors that virtually control women's lives. These factors include social organization, psychosocial environment, supernatural beliefs, food dietetics, and ethnomedical systems, all having powerful ideological

overtures and symbolic meanings. Health strategies for women in households are aimed mainly at reproductive success and rarely with concern for maternal health. Based on in-depth interviews with more than fifty Garhwali women, midwives, traditional healers, health workers, and medical doctors, this ethnographic research elaborates on the culturally constructed constraints and facilitators that surround the reality of reproductive health among Garhwali women. Using a critical interpretive perspective, this paper analyzes how reproductive health is structured and negotiated among Garhwali peasants and discusses its public health consequences.

**Knowing "The Truth"/Erasing "The Self":  
Buddhist Meditation and Political  
Foundations in Nepal**

Lauren Leve  
*Princeton University*

Theravada Buddhist meditation shifts the epistemological foundations upon which personhood, subjectivity and citizenship are produced in contemporary Nepal by changing people's understandings of "the truth" and "the self." This paper looks at the pedagogy and practices through which bodily experience is made to reveal the true absence of the self in a popular Theravada meditation movement, and the implications of this transformation in the political realm. One of the fastest growing sites of Theravada participation in Nepal today is a vipassana meditation center outside of Kathmandu. Here, in specially organized meditation retreats, practitioners learn to recognize and experience the truth of Buddha's teachings in their own corporeal bodies. Meditating ten days at a time, not less than 11 hours a day, students are taught to observe and interpret physical sensations (watching, with detachment, as feelings "arise" and "pass away") and to understand through this practice the central Buddhist doctrine of anatman (Not-Soul) as truth. Knowledge of this truth of the self, then,

becomes the basis of a powerful critique of social personhood and the state, as mediators reject rituals and identities that would align them with the sociopolitical body of the Hindu nation in favor of the "truer" subjectivity of the (Theravada) ethical individual. Here, I trace the conflict between religion and state in the production, and erasure, of subjects and selves in Nepal today, and call into question another culturally located epistemology embedded in anthropological thought that separates "religion" from "politics" and "subjects" from "self."

**Love and Death: The Contingent Self in a  
Buddhist Society**

Ernestine McHugh  
*University of Rochester*

Among the Gurungs of Nepal, styles of interaction and discussions of personal vulnerability reflect a sense of a self that is not a coherent, consistent, firmly bounded entity. Social life is orchestrated in such a way as to affirm the interactive self and protect the individual against "natural" tendencies toward disintegration. Invasive forces are believed to lurk in the environment, creating an ever-present sense of threat. The perceived fragility of self is a cause of considerable anxiety. However, the deepest satisfaction that people report grows from being absorbed in an enveloping human world, and consolation for misfortune is sought through traversing the same boundaries whose porousness admits pain. Experientially, the very vulnerabilities that are believed to expose the person to loss of self (ultimately death) provide basis for the pleasures most celebrated in Gurung society. What is the complex of experience that creates a world organized in these terms? How is such a way of life sustained and what are its costs? This paper will provide a preliminary investigation of these questions, drawing on relational psychoanalysis as an explanatory framework and considering parallels between Gurung constructions of self and Buddhist ideas of dependent co-arising.

**Annual Meeting, Association for Asian Studies  
Washington D.C. March 1998**

**"I'll Not Farm While I'm Alive": Resistance  
among Hunter-Gatherers of South Asia**

Jana Fortier  
*Southwest State University*

South Asian foragers, known in India as "scheduled tribes," "adivasi," and "vimukta jati," have been depicted as backward, passive, and primitive in relation to

surrounding sedentary populations. Research accounts of forager exchange behavior can inadvertently promote this misrepresentation when they focus on simple reciprocity and sharing behavior and neglect the range of other strategies that enable foragers to resist assimilation into the underclasses of Hindu society. The paper counters oversimplified representations of forager economics with recent research about the nomadic Raute of western Nepal who practice net hunting of monkey,

collection of forest yams and other vegetables, and wood carving. Raute in-group social relations emphasize sharing and demand sharing, practices which, I argue, resist the dominant Hindu society's hierarchical structure. With surrounding Hindu agropastoralists, however, Raute employ asymmetrical strategies of patronage, fictive kinship, barter, and begging in order to accommodate the dominant society. I suggest that the Raute's flexible resistance and accommodation when dealing with sedentary populations has enabled the Raute to maintain a separate, autonomous social space and resist the assimilation into the underclasses of Hindu society that has befallen many other South Asian foragers such as the Chenchu, Malapantaram, and Vedda. The paper concludes that contemporary South Asian foragers like the Raute actively manage their cultural spaces through accommodation in some cases and resistance in other cases in order to survive within the hegemonic cultural spaces of the surrounding Hindu agropastoral populations.

### **Conceptions of Childbirth: Cultural Meanings and Biological Processes in Nepal**

Laura M. Ahearn  
*University of South Carolina*

In this paper, I use qualitative and quantitative data to explore how a group of Hindu women in Nepal interpret, endure, and culturally construct the biological process of childbirth. Drawing on years of participant observation, dozens of tape-recorded narratives of childbirth, and my findings from a survey of birth histories of all ever-married women in the village of Junigau, I present an analysis of rapidly-changing birthing practices and the meanings villagers associate with them. Whereas only a generation ago most Junigau women gave birth alone in the cowshed or out in a field for fear of ritually polluting their homes, most births now occur inside houses or in the district center's hospital, which is a three-hour walk away. Moreover, most births are now attended by female relatives or trained birth attendants. What effects have these changes had on birth outcomes and on how Junigau villagers conceive of the process of childbirth? After discussing several trends, such as age at first marriage, age at first birth, location of birth, and infant and maternal mortality rates, I correlate these trends with changes in courtship and marriage practices. In particular, I look at some of the effects on fertility and childbirth practices of a shift away from arranged and capture marriage toward elopement (or "love" marriage). Finally, I analyze excerpts from Junigau women's narratives of childbirth in order to ascertain what meanings and values the women themselves attribute to these changing patterns.

### **Tragic Sense in the Poetry of Lallesvari and Sankaracarya**

Lalita Pandit  
*University of Wisconsin, La Crosse*

I shall focus on the constitution of tragic sensibility in the devotional poetry of Lallesvari, a Kashmiri woman poet (14th century) and Sankaracarya (8th century A.D.), the founder of Vedanta. In the devotional poetry of these poets one finds a kind of despair and world weariness that counters the idyllic myth of a perfect Kashmiri and/or Indian past, the myth of the golden age. At the same time, the superb poetic of Lallesvari and Sankaracarya offer evidence of a significant precolonial literary tradition. While the excellence of Lallesvari's poems has been amply acknowledged by Kashmiris worldwide, Sankara's superb contributions to Sanskrit poetry have remained unacknowledged. His tragic sense has only been seen as a rhetorical device to inspire the reader with a sort of world weariness that would make him/her a single-minded devotee of a transcendent divinity. My purpose is to move away from the conventional habit of seeing Sankara's tragic sense as simply a persuasive ploy, but to see it ontologically as Sankara's secular understanding of the human condition. In Lallesvari's poems also, the mysticism has been emphasized too much and the stark realism has been neglected. A focus on psychological realism will help to bring out specific aspects of their poetry that have had wide appeal for those who read these poets in their own cultural settings.

### **The Poet-Saints of Kashmir and the Kashmiri Poet Today**

Agha Shahid Ali  
*University of Massachusetts, Amherst*

Like so many conflicts of this century, the current crisis in Kashmir has made us painfully aware of the dehumanizing brutality that is often bound up with a politics of identity based on religion. And yet, communalism of this sort is not the heritage of Kashmiri literary and religious thought. The great Sufi saints and the great Saiva mystics revered and learned from one another. They saw Islam and Hinduism, not as antagonistic, but as complementary. Today, a Kashmiri poet cannot help but be concerned with the condition of his native land, and cannot help but respond to this in his or her poetry. The works of Nuruddin, Lallesvari, and others, provide the contemporary Kashmiri poet with a model of anti-communalist writing that is deeply a part of the Kashmiri tradition itself. In this paper, I shall consider the general significance of these poet-saints to Kashmiri literature and philosophy today, drawing on my own recent poetry for examples.



## **Adam Exiled from the Gardens of Kashmir: Midnight's Children and the Death of Kashmiri Tradition**

Patrick C. Hogan  
*University of Connecticut*

Midnight's Children is no doubt the most widely read and influential novel by a writer of Kashmiri heritage. Rushdie begins the story with Adam--the beloved Grandfather of the protagonist, Saleem--in the vale of Kashmir. Moreover, he makes repeated reference to Kashmir in the course of the novel. This emphasis on Kashmir is, I believe, crucial to the political themes of the novel. Yet it has been almost entirely ignored by critics. Specifically, we may distinguish between two types of identity. One is "practical," our ordinary ways of doing things, the customs and habits that allow us to interact with other members of our community with ease and confidence. The other is "representational." This is not a matter of sharing habits and expectations with other members of our community, but of sharing some supposedly definitive category--most often a religious or national category (e.g., "Muslim" or "Hindu"; "Indian" or "Pakistani"). What is called "identity politics"--perhaps the central thematic concern of Rushdie's novel--is, in effect, politics based on representational identity. For Rushdie, identity politics pervade the new nation-states of India and Pakistan. But Kashmir is different. Kashmir represents a distinct type of community, a community based, not on representational identity, but on practical identity, on a shared tradition. This paper will consider the way Rushdie develops this image of Kashmir in contrast with the images of India and Pakistan, whose 1947 conflict serves to "kill" Kashmiri tradition in Rushdie's allegory.

## **Indian Federalism: Enter the Sub-state**

David Stuligross  
*University of California, Berkeley*

The world associates India's Hindu nationalist BJP with the destruction of mosques and nuclear explosions. One of the party's central planks in recent years, however, has been the creation of new states out of some of the existing larger states in India's quasi-federation, and a proposal to create four such states has become the most controversial domestic political issue of the party's first three months in power. As these four regions move one step closer to statehood, demands by other sub-regions for states of their own have become more strident. Many scholars have expressed concern that the trends of further administrative division and greater functional authority of states relative to the central government will combine to weaken Indian unity and threaten its development potential. However,

political interaction in modern India does not pit one institution against another for all time, or one group against another. First, for all the hue and cry, most states depend on the central government for developmental resources. Within the decentralization dynamic some states would prefer that authority be retained in Delhi, and states are bargaining with one another to further state-state cooperation. Second, sub-state autonomy movements direct their claims primarily against their state, not the central government. A greater number of smaller states, if new states are created, would decrease the ability of any of them to negotiate new authority transfers from the central government--particularly because the new states would have a history of rancor with some of the old ones and because the new states would be more than usually economically dependent on the central government. State governments might co-opt sub-state movements, but this would require a broadening of their current developmental visions to include very disparate social and economic groups. I will explore these issues through a survey of autonomy movements in India with special attention to Uttarakhand and Jharkhand, which constitute two of the four states currently proposed.

## **Session 55: Newar Buddhist Iconography and Practices: Towards Defining the Buddhism of the Newar Community in the Kathmandu Valley**

Organizer and Chair: John C. Huntington  
*Ohio State University*

Over the past five years, I and a team of scholars from the Ohio State University have engaged in a series of multidisciplinary projects (Techniques from Art History, Buddhism, Cultural Anthropology, Folklore, History, and Philology were involved) in an effort to fully understand the Buddhist religion of the Newars. We have visited almost every Buddhist site in the valley, discussed Buddhist practice with most of the leading practitioners, observed rituals and documented our efforts with 30,000 field photographs, more than 1,000 pages of notes, 80 hours of video tape, and dozens of audio tapes. What we have discovered is a vital and energetic community of practitioners who adhere to a set of practices revolving around the narrative of the Swayambhupurana. In a classic example of enacting Eliade's myth of the eternal return, the priests of the community lead the sangha and the laity through a set series of rituals of annual renewal. And yet in the secret agams of their bahals, they perform tantric rituals for their own Buddhological attainment and advancement. While there is significant variance between rituals as practiced by the Vajracharyas communities of Kathmandu and Patan, the underlying themes are fundamentally similar. The papers that are included in this panel are aimed at key issues and unique

features of Newar Buddhism. They are the results of research that will eventually lead to several major publications on Newar Buddhism.

### **The Yoginis of Newar Buddhism: An Ontological Interpretation**

Dina Bangdel,  
*Western Michigan University*

To the Newar Buddhist, the Kathmandu Valley is conceived of as the Cakrasamvara Mandala, with the shrines of the goddesses (yogini) defining this conceptual ideal within the Valley's sacred geography. The placement of the twenty-four Astamatrika (Mother Goddesses) pithas and the four Yogini shrines conceptually mirrors the structure of the Cakrasamvara Mandala, thereby reifying the sacrality of the Valley. In other words, with Vajravahni as the emanator of the yogini tantra Mandala of Cakrasamvara, it is the goddesses or yoginis that define spatial ordering of the Valley in the Newar Buddhist context. What does it mean for the Newar Buddhist practitioner that the Valley is generated by Cakrasamvara/Vajravahni? I will discuss the significance of yoginis in the idealized construct of the religion. I will also examine here the role of the Eight Mother Goddesses in context of the Cakrasamvara practices of Newar Buddhism. A major focus here is to explore the yoginis as the ontological source for the Cakrasamvara cycle in Newar Buddhism. I will present a buddhological interpretation of the Valley's conceptual mapping, specifically examining the relationship of important yoginis of Newar Buddhism: Guhyesvari, Vajravahni/Vajradevi, and the Astamatrkas. The analysis of the yoginis in relation to the conceptual construct of the Valley as the Cakrasamvara Mandala will highlight their significance in the Tantric practices of Newar Buddhism.

### **Conceptual Relationships between Kumari Baha, Mandalic Representations, and the Kathmandu Valley**

Janice Glowski  
*Ohio State University*

The conceptual relationship between architectural design and mandalic representation plays an integral role in the socio-religious sphere of Nepal's Kathmandu Valley. This relationship has been touched on by scholars such as Van Kooij, Kolver, and Gellner, though much remains to be done on both general and specific levels. This paper examines the iconography and architectural design of Kumari Baha (Kumari Chen), a religious center located in Kathmandu's main square next to the old Malla Palace, and considers them within the context of other socio-religious centers and religious

presuppositions found in the Valley. Through comparative techniques, this paper establishes relationships between the structure and iconography of Kumari Baha and the larger conceptual and mandalic notions of the Valley.

### **New Episodes in the Narrative of the Life of Sakyamuni Buddha: Findings in a Book of Drawings from the Collection of the Los Angeles County Museum of Art**

Chaya Chandrasekhar  
*Ohio State University*

The life of Sakyamuni Buddha is one of the most studied and recounted narratives in Buddhist literature and traditional art historical studies. Apart from the established canon, scholars have also recorded and interpreted less frequently occurring episodes that have made their way into the collection over time. A book of drawings, recording various important deities and festivals of Nepal, in the Los Angeles County Museum of Art, provides yet another variation in the life of the Buddha narrative. While recounting some of the regular events such as the birth, the great departure, the moment of enlightenment, and so on, this narrative focuses on the Buddha's evil cousin and nemesis, Devadatta, who otherwise does not play a major role in the regular accounts of the life of Sakyamuni. The story appears to be based on no known Buddhist literary source. In this paper I will describe the events recorded in the Los Angeles book of drawings and recount the story as it appears in the caption to the illustrations. Based on the events recorded, I suggest that the narrative may have had a non-Buddhist source.

### **A Case Study in Religious Continuity: The Bengal Connection: Stone Carved Evidence of Newar Buddhist Methodologies in the Sculpture of Northern and Eastern Bengal**

John C. Huntington  
*Ohio State University*

During a detailed examination of subsidiary figures on the Buddhist stele of Ancient Bengal, several elements have come to light that suggest Buddhist soteriological methodologies still current among the Newars of the Kathmandu Valley were also practiced in Bengal of the ninth through twelfth centuries. Specifically sculptural figures of Vajrasattva as the officiating priest, Manjusri as Vairocana and images of deities from both the Namasangiti' Dharmadhatu Vagisvara Manjughosa mandala and the Samvarodaya Cakrasamvara mandala cycles suggest a close relationship between practices in Bengal and those in the Kathmandu Valley. This connection is especially

interesting in light of the tradition from the Svayambhupurana that the great Nepali Buddhist Saint Shantikaracharya was himself from Gaur and that his line of initiation (diksha) as the first Vajracharya priest (who during certain rituals is understood to be Vajrasattva) took place in Nepal under the tutelage of Manjudeva, an incarnation of the Bodhisattva Mahacina Manjusri. While it is not possible to suggest a primacy for either area, it is certain that both historically and religiously the ancient areas of Gaur in Bengal and the Kathmandu Valley had close connections for a considerable period of time. The physical resemblance of some of the carvings to current ritual practice is both remarkable and yet, in a conservative traditional society, expected.

### **Session 35: ROUNDTABLE: The Politics of Culture and Identity in Contemporary Nepal**

Organizer and Chair: William F. Fisher, *Harvard University*

Discussants: David Gellner, *Brunel University*; Susan Hangen, *University of Wisconsin, Madison*; Karl-Heinz Kramer, *University of Heidelberg*; Lauren Leve, *Princeton University*; Kathryn March, *Cornell University*; Mukta Singh Tamang, *Cornell University*

In the wake of the 1990 "restoration" of democracy, ethnic activism has become a prominent and, for some, an alarming part of Nepal's political arena. The "janajati" movement is composed of a mosaic of social organizations and political parties dominated by groups of peoples who have historically spoken Tibeto-Burman languages. This movement has reshaped political discourse in Nepal by persistently challenging the previously accepted dominant view of national culture, religion, and language, and by presenting a potentially revolutionary vision of Nepal as a multicultural, multilingual, and multireligious nation. This conflict pits anger and resentment about the two-hundred-year-history of economic, political, and cultural dominance of Nepal by high-caste hill Hindus against fears that Nepal is on the verge of violent disintegration that would make it another Sri Lanka or Yugoslavia. This roundtable brings together scholars who have conducted extensive research on different dimensions of the janajati movement to share their perspectives, explore the divergent and sometimes contradictory modes of activism in the janajati movement, and to discuss the changes that are occurring as new organizations emerge, actors reposition themselves, and new issues arise. The roundtable has two goals: first and most immediately, to explore in some depth the complex and changing nature of relationships among various actors, social organizations, political parties, and local populations involved in and affected by the janajati movement in Nepal; and secondly, to seek a framework for analyzing this and similar movements in South and Southeast

Asia. [editor's note: proceedings from this panel are to appear in HRB 20:1]

### **Session 205: Before the War: Literary and Philosophical Traditions of Kashmir**

Organizer and Chair: Patrick C. Hogan, *University of Connecticut*

Discussant: Ainslie T. Embree, *Columbia University*

The AAS has sponsored some extremely valuable sessions on Kashmir. However, these sessions have virtually ignored Kashmir's rich cultural heritage. This panel will consider some aspects of that heritage, exploring both its intrinsic value and its relevance to current events. Rosenfield will focus on Vedic religion, examining the roots of Kashmir Hinduism, and addressing the important practical issue of preserving ancient manuscripts in the current political situation. Pandit will take up the theme of despair in the hymns of Sankaracarya and Lallesvari. In addition to presenting a novel, aesthetic re-interpretation of these writers, this paper also suggests that any idealization of the past is no less misguided in Kashmir than elsewhere. Shahid Ali, the foremost Kashmiri poet today, will consider the contemporary relevance of Medieval Muslim and Hindu poet-saints, such as Lallesvari and Nuruddin, writers whose religious attitudes and expressions were profoundly opposed to the communalistic antagonism that has had such tragic consequences recently. Finally, Hogan will consider Salman Rushdie's characterization of Kashmiri tradition in *Midnight's Children*. In Rushdie's novel, the social polity that grew out of Kashmiri tradition is directly contrasted with, and ultimately destroyed by, the modern nation-states of India and Pakistan. Our hope is that this panel will suggest some of the wealth of Kashmiri tradition, its intrinsic value as an object of literary and philosophical study, but also its significance for current issues--from concerns about the cultural preservation to the more immediately human and consequential dilemma of communalism.

### **Rescuing Remnants of the Kashmiri Vedic Tradition**

Susan J. Rosenfield  
*Harvard University*

Kashmir was once home to an early branch of the Black Yajur Veda known as the Katha Shakha. This school flourished up until the 14th century after which time gradual conversions to Islam fragmented the school and brought an end to its recitation tradition. What did remain was a manuscript tradition maintained by the Pandit families. Among these manuscripts there exists a vast corpus of Puja and ritual handbooks known as

Richikas. They contain various mantras, Grihya sutras, and ritual procedures both Vedic and Tantric. Also included in these Richikas we find what little is left of the Katha-Brahmana literature. The Katha school has no extant Brahmana per se. All that remains of the Shrauta or high ritual tradition is found in fragments of these few Brahmanas scattered throughout the handbooks. Brahmana literature includes ritual exegesis on the high ritual performances called Yajnas. This exegesis involves narrations on the mythologies of the Vedic gods as well as the implications of various phraseologies and actions undertaken during the Shrauta

or high rituals. Typically, these Brahmanas do not pertain to the Grihya or householder rituals connected to the rites of passage known as Samskaras. However, in the Katha School and in several chapters of the Shatapatha Brahmana, we find Brahmanas explaining the significance of these householder rituals. This paper will explore these unique Grihya Brahmanas for their style, content and usage. The Katha Brahmanas in particular will be analyzed and reasons for their householder orientation explored.

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## OTHER CONFERENCES

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### **Sacred Mountains and Environmental Conservation: A Practitioner's Workshop**

The Mountain Institute, Franklin, West Virginia  
April 15-18, 1998

The full text of the final report can either be viewed or downloaded by visiting:

<http://www2.mtnforum.org/mtnforum/whatsnew/whatsnew.htm>

### **Representation of the Self and Representation of the Other in the Himalayas: Space, History, Culture**

Meudon, France  
September 25-26, 1998

This was the first workshop of the European Bulletin of Himalayan Research (EBHR). The need was felt to organise a regular—annual or bi-annual—thematic workshop to gather the different scholars participating in the EBHR. The next workshop will take place in London, on the theme of Life Histories. The Bulletin will be handed over to British colleagues, starting with the next issue (17) for a period of three years. The editorial board will include Michael Hutt, David Gellner and Ben Campbell, while the German and French editors will continue to be involved. This revolving editorship constitutes an effective European network and warrants the periodical renovation of the Bulletin. From January 1999, subscriptions and all correspondence should be addressed to:

Dr Michael Hutt  
SOAS, University of London  
Thornough Street  
Russell Square  
London WC1H 0XG  
U.K.

The first workshop gathered more than 50 scholars from different European countries. Eleven contributions

were presented, analysing Himalayan identities through diverse fields: tribal revendications, formation of ethnic consciousness in caste groups, ideology perceptible within folk-tales and literature, rituals and historical materials. Each communication was followed by a discussion from another specialist of the domain. A synthesis and general discussion ended the workshop.

The proceedings of the workshop will appear as a book with the following preliminary table of contents:

Pascale Dollfus & Marie Lecomte-Tilouine:  
*Introduction*

William Douglas: *Washing your Neighbour's God*

Discussion Veronique Bouillier

Michael Hutt: Reading 'Sumnima'

Discussion Martin Gaenzle

Ben Campbell: *Identity and Power in a Conflictual Environment (Tamang)*

Discussion Andras Höfer

David Gellner: *From Cultural Hierarchies to a Hierarchy of Multiculturalisms: The Case of the Newars of the Kathmandu valley, Nepal*

Discussion Gerard Toffin

Joanna Pfaff-Czarnecka: *Ethnic Markers in Local and National Comparison*

Discussion Marie Lecomte-Tilouine

Gil Daryn: *Ethnicity without an Ethnic Group*

Discussion Philippe Ramirez

Eberhard Berg: *Dumji and Zhindak: Local Festival Performance and Patronage as a Crucial Source of Sherpa Identity*

Discussion Nicolas Sihle

Karl-Heinz Krämer: *The Janajati and the Nepali State: Aspects of Identity and Integration*

Discussion, Anne de Sales

Joanne Moller: *Insiders and Outsiders: Community and Identity in Kumaon, North India*

Discussion Antje Linkenbach-Fuchs

Martijn van Beek: *The Art of Representation: Domesticating Ladakhi Identity*

Discussion: Pascale Dollfus

Martin Sökefeld: *Selves and Others: Representing Multiplicities of Difference in Gilgit, Northern Areas of Pakistan*

Discussion Marc Gaborieau

Steve Brown: *Synthesis and Questions*

### Workshop on Governance and Economic Transformation of Uttaranchal/Uttarakhand

Dehradun, U.P., India  
October 27-28, 1998

Hosted by Research, Advocacy and Communication in Himalayan Areas (RACHNA).

<http://www.geocities.com/~karnavati/RACHNA>

Uttarakhand, a compact of ten hill districts of Uttar Pradesh, inhabited by over five million people remains one of the underdeveloped parts of India. The Government of India, after many years of struggle by the local population, has finally put in motion a process for the creation of a new hill state. The popular view is that a smaller state in the hands of elected local representatives would be more appreciative of the developmental situation of the hills, sensitive to hill cultural traditions and adopt pragmatic approaches in problem solving.

The workshop was geared toward generating ideas on how Uttaranchal/Uttarakhand could be transformed into an economic powerhouse while meeting the basic needs and popular aspirations of the local people. An essential requirement for people-centered development is good governance. The goal of governance initiatives is to develop capacities that are needed to realise development that gives priority to poverty alleviation, the advancement of women and children, sustains the environment and creates needed opportunities for employment and better socio-economic conditions.

For further information, please contact:

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Fax: (91 11) 612 4457  
Email: [ecv@nda.vsnl.net.in](mailto:ecv@nda.vsnl.net.in)

### Conference on the Buddhist Heritage of Nepal Mandal

Kathmandu, Nepal  
November 1-5, 1998

For more information on this conference contact:  
Conference on the Buddhist Heritage of Nepal Mandal  
Organizing Committee  
PO Box 59  
Mahapal, Lalitpur  
e-mail: [lrc@wlink.com.np](mailto:lrc@wlink.com.np)

Papers Presentations:

Bajra Raj Shakya: *Characteristics of Buddhist Culture in Nepal*

Hubert Decler: *Beyond the Cute Customs: Newar Buddhism in the Larger Context of Buddhist History*

Chakra Mehar Bajracharya: *Impact of Physical Environment in Newa Buddhism*

Bhadra Ratna Bajracharya: *Licchavi Society and Buddhism*

Anne Vergatti: *Image and Ritual: A Bhimaratha Painting*

Madansen Bajracharya: *Lokabaja in Newa Buddhist Culture*

Alexander V. Rospatt: *Conflicting Conceptions of the Srisrisri-Svayambhucaitya as a Holy Shrine*

Phanindra Ratna Bajracharya: *Guthi in Newa Buddhist Culture*

Punya P. Parajuli: *Mahayana Buddhism of Nepal Mandal*

William Douglas: *Sources of Gunakarandavyuha*

Naresh Man Bajracharya: *Nepal Mandal in Nepalese Buddhist Tradition*

Min Bahadur Shakya: *Monasticism in Newar Buddhism*

Yagya Man Pati Bajracharya: *Charyageet*

Kedar Bajracharya: *Position of Newa Buddhist Culture outside Kathmandu Valley*

Sudarshan Mahasthavira: *Role of Theravada Tradition Buddhism in the Conservation of Newa Buddhism*

Munindra R. Bajracharya: *Karunamaya Jatra in Newa Buddhist Culture*

Rev. Sucho Takaoka: *Contribution of Nepal Buddhism to the World Culture*

**CNAS National Seminar on Domestic Violence Conflicts and Crises of Governability in Nepal**

November 17-18, 1998

**Paper Presentations:**

Dhruba Kumar: What Ails Democracy in Nepal?

Lok Raj Baral: Crises of Governance or Callous Elite Attitude Toward Problems?

Krishna Hachhethu: Nepali Politics: Political Parties, Political Crisis and Problem of Governance

Dilli Ram Dahal: Nepal's Governing Elite: Their Composition and Role in Constituting the State

Krishna Bhattachan: Possible Ethnic Revolution in a Predatory Unitary Hindu State, Nepal

Kapil Shrestha: Minority Rights and Human Rights

Pancha N. Maharjan: Crisis of Governability: A Case of Maoist Insurgency in Nepal

Suman Sharma: Some Aspects of Dependency Crisis in Nepal

Ajaya Dixit and Dipak Gyawali: Domestic Conflicts on Resource Negotiation

**National Seminar on Nepal and SAARC**

Hotel Himalaya, Lalitpur

November 25-26, 1998

Organized by the Coalition for Action on South Asia (CASAC) in cooperation with Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung (FES).

**Paper Presentations:**

B. P. Shrestha: SAARC Beyond 2000: Outline of an Economic Perspective

Binod Karmacharya: Nepal in SAARC: Trade and Investment Potentials

Mavin Chhetri: South Asian Free Trade Area: With Special Reference to AFTA, NAFTA, EU and WTO

Madhukar S. Rana: Sub-Regional Cooperation in South Asia: Potentials for Nepal

Jyoti Lohani: Nepal in SAARC: Some Policy Options

**Linguistic Society of Nepal 19th Annual Conference**

November 26-27, 1998

**Session I: Phonetics and Phonology**

Chair: Dr. Ramawatar Yadav

Madhav P. Pokharel: Default of Non-Syllabic Vocoids in Nepali

Karen Grunow-Harsta: An Analysis of Murmur in Magar

Barbara Kelly: Phonological Differences Across Sherpa Dialects

Holly Smith: A Tonal Analysis of Ghale

**Session II: Morphology and Syntax**

Chair: Churamani Bandhu

Yogendra P. Yadava: Split Wordhood of NV Complex Predicates: Evidence from Maithili

Kristine A. Hildebrandt: A Preliminary Analysis of Evidentiality in Manange

Kazuyuki Kiryu: Comparative Study of Aspectual Auxiliaries in Newari and Japanese, with Special Reference to Cwane and Iru

Gerard J. Tolsma: Aspects of Kulung Grammar

**Session III: Grammar and Discourse**

Chair: Madhav P. Pokharel

Balthasar Bickel: Spatial deixis in Belhare (Kiranti) and linguistic relativity

Austin Hale and Kedar P. Shrestha: Newar Constructional Links

Balthasar Bickel, Walter Bisang and Yogendra P. Yadava: Face vs. Empathy: The Social Foundation of Maithili Verb Agreement

Yogesh Raj: The Newar Concept of Time: Some Preliminary Observations

**Session IV: Languages on Nepal Information Management System**

Daniel McCloy: Presentation and Computer Demonstration

**Session V: Historical Typological and Sociolinguistic Studies**

Chair: Ballabh Mani Dahal

George van Driem: Mahakiranti Grammatical Etyma in Baram

Bryan K. Varenkamp: Lexical Stability within Tamang Speech Varieties

Mark Turin: Numeral Classifiers, Echo Vowels and Dialectology in Thangmi

Jeff Webster: The Language Development—Language Promotion Tension: A Case Study from Limbu

Stephen A. Watters: A Brief Sociolinguistic Study of the Mugum in North West Nepal

## **Shimla Symposium on Development in Mountains: National Workshop on Socio-economic Development in Hill/Mountain Areas**

Himachal Pradesh University, Shimla, Himachal Pradesh, India

December 11-13, 1998

The Facilitating University-NGO-Government Partnership was organized by the Indian University Association for Continuing Education in collaboration with the Centre for Adult, Continuing Education and Extension. The workshop facilitated participation of universities and NGOs in hill areas in the northern parts of India and government departments from Himachal Pradesh including the Forest Department, Horticulture Department, Planning Department, Council for Science and Technology, National Agricultural Bank for Agriculture and Rural Development and the District Primary Education Programme.

The dominant concerns articulated in the workshop favoured a pro-poor planning and implementation process with the poor being placed as central actors in planning and implementation processes. The poor knew the value of their natural environment; they had a vested interest in preserving and sustaining the natural resources.

The participants recommended points for follow-up action including: initiate formulation of educational programmes for the community and the Forest Department staff to support conservation of forests; initiate action research towards identification of alternative materials for house construction and observance of ceremonies to reduce pressure on treewood; support micro-enterprise development programmes to launch efforts to utilize the thick mat of needles in the forest as raw material for manufacturing fibre boards, etc., and use of lantana in the forests to manufacture fuel bricks; plan watershed development programmes aimed at supporting people's participation in construction of water-harvesting structures by the local people to enhance access to water; undertake a study of the working of the VFDCs to identify the processes involved in participatory group dynamics and the manner in which elements of equity can be enhanced in their day-to-day functioning; develop profiles of migratory population in the state with a view to planning alternate strategies for the education of their children; initiate interaction with the various development departments (Forests, Horticulture, Agriculture, Rural Energy, Small Scale and Cottage Industries, Nutrition, etc.) with a view to identifying critical development issues facing the communities of the poor in the hill areas and follow it up with preparation of supplementary learning materials based on such development constraints and crises; study the dynamics of working with the VECs to identify the diversity of local concerns which often impeded parental

interest in the planning and management of education of their children; hold meetings with NGOs and Universities to identify areas of partnership for development rights of the poor in hill/mountain areas; set up a Himachal Pradesh Development Forum to support advocacy action based on meaningful documentation for proportionate access to national development resources for the hill/mountain areas; initiate studies to identify causes of diseases affecting trees in the forests and the steps which the local population can take to reduce the incidence of such problems; initiate studies aimed at documenting man's mismanagement of natural resources which often results in natural disasters and avoidable loss of human lives and resources of the poor; undertake work relating to a catalogue of non-farm occupations in rural and hill areas to enable the poor to decide on alternate occupations for sustainable livelihoods, strengthen the participation of local institutions of self-governance alongside efforts at decentralization in development bureaucratic processes; and support a tie-up between the Council for Science and Technology and the financial institutions to propagate locally relevant and low cost energy technologies.

## **The South Asian Popular Culture Conference**

University of Victoria, Victoria, BC,  
April 22-24, 1999

This year's Annual Asian Popular Culture Conference focused on Bangladesh, India, Nepal, Pakistan, and Sri Lanka - South Asia! A rich program of paper presentations and activities made this an exciting event. Genres and topics included music, cinema, television, the visual arts, literature, comics, fashion, religion, gender issues, national identities, and the diaspora.

To view the Conference Program please refer to the Conference Website: <http://web.uvic.ca/hrd/capipopcult> or contact

Heather MacDonald  
Conference Coordinator  
Centre for Asia-Pacific Initiatives  
Begbie Building, Room 131  
University of Victoria, Box 1700  
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Telephone: (250) 721-7022  
Fax: (250) 721-3107  
E-Mail: [hjm@uvic.ca](mailto:hjm@uvic.ca)

**International Workshop: "Mongolian and Tibetan Historical Sources: Computer Approaches"**

Moscow, Russia  
July 14-16, 1999

Sponsored by the Institute of Oriental Studies of the Russian Academy of Sciences, Orientalists' Society, Orientalist Information Centre, Eurasian Oriental Server

Electronic editing, describing and systematising of Mongolian and Tibetan manuscripts and inscriptions, fine arts masterpieces, folklore texts and artifacts, etc.; theory, methods and technology of creating the electronic catalogues and databases of Mongolian and Tibetan texts, their keeping and handling, also exchanging the electronic copies of these texts and promoting the long-distance access to them.

For further information, please contact: EURASIAN ORIENTAL SERVER (EAOS <http://www.orient.ru>)

Dimitry D. Vasilyev  
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Orientalists' Society of the RAS  
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**Ladakh Studies Meetings: The 9th Colloquium of the International Association for Ladakh Studies**

Leh, Ladakh, India  
August 25-29, 1999

IALS colloquia have been held regularly, usually every other year, since 1981, and are intended to bring together people from many disciplines interested or engaged in Ladakh studies. At this time, the organizers are inviting proposals for papers and/or panels and wish to gauge interest in participation.

Anyone interested in participating is requested to pre-register at this time and—if applicable—to submit a short (250 words) abstract for a paper, preferably by e-mail.

Send all communications to:

John Bray  
Hon. Sec. IALS  
55B Central Hill  
London SE19 1BS  
U.K.

E-mail: [miyoko@jblon.win-uk.net](mailto:miyoko@jblon.win-uk.net)

Participants from South Asia may prefer to contact the Leh Organising Committee directly:

Abdul Ghani Sheikh  
Hon. Membership Sec, Ladakh  
Yasmin Guest House  
Fort Road  
Leh-Ladakh 194101  
INDIA  
Fax: (++ 91)1982-52631

**5th Himalayan Languages Symposium**

Tribhuvan University, Kathmandu, Nepal  
September 13-15, 1999

The Himalayan Languages Symposium is an open international forum where scholars can exchange the results of their research with others working on related issues in the same geographical area. The term 'Himalayan' is used in its broadest sense to include north-western and north-eastern India, where languages of Indo-Aryan, Dravidian, Tibeto-Burman and Austro-Asiatic linguistic stock are spoken, and languages of Nepal, Bhutan and the Tibetan Plateau, northern Burma and Sichuan, Nuristan, Baltistan and the Burushaki speaking area in the west. The term 'Languages' is used as opposed to 'Linguistics' to broaden the scope of the symposium beyond linguistics proper, so as to allow those scholars working in related disciplines such as archeology, philology and anthropology working with language issues to present their research wherever this is directly relevant to our understanding of Himalayan languages and language communities.

The Permanent Secretariat for this annual Symposium is maintained at Leiden University in the Netherlands. Previously, the Himalayan Languages Symposium has been convened at Leiden, at Noordwijkerhout, Santa Barbara, California and Pune, India.

**Abstracts:**

Abstracts should be limited to one page, with text in a space no larger than 6 x 8 inches, including the title and the name and institution of the scholar. Accepted abstracts will be bound into a booklet and distributed at the conference. So, please adhere to the size guidelines and deadline. The deadline for abstracts is July 31st, 1999. Abstracts should be sent to the address below.

Dr. Tej R. Kansakar  
Chairman, Organizing Committee  
5th Himalayan Languages Symposium  
PO Box 7045  
Kathmandu, Nepal  
Fax: 977-1-226-964; 1-221-175  
Phone: 977-1-222-960; 522-779, 331-210  
E-mail: [tejk@vishnu.ccsl.com.np](mailto:tejk@vishnu.ccsl.com.np);  
[bandhu@ccsl.com.np](mailto:bandhu@ccsl.com.np); [yadava@yp.wlink.com.np](mailto:yadava@yp.wlink.com.np)

Registration Fee: Foreign participants, US \$50.00,  
Indian participants, Rs 400.00



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## FORTHCOMING CONFERENCES

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**International Conference on Asian Urbanization: Challenges of Urbanization in the Twenty-First Century**

University of Madras, Chennai, India  
January 5-9, 2000

The Sixth Asian Urbanization Conference plans to address the challenges of the trends of urbanization in Asia continuing to the next century. This will be the first International Conference of the 21st Century to discuss the problems of Asian urbanization and the role of social scientists. As such it may provide a direction and trend-setting of research on the problems and solutions of Asian urbanization.

Papers are invited from social scientists and other interested persons from all over the world. The last date for submitting an abstract is June 30, 1999 and the last date for submitting a full paper is September 30, 1999.

For further information please contact:

<http://www.bsu.edu/geog/aura> or  
<http://www.bsu.edu/aura>

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**The Ninth Seminar of the International Association for Tibetan Studies**

University of Leiden, Leiden, The Netherlands  
June 24-30, 2000

Information regarding this conference can be found at the website of the International Institute of Asian Studies (IIAS): <http://iias.leidenuniv.nl/iias/agenda/iats/>

It is also possible to send e-mail to:  
[iats@rullet.leidenuniv.nl](mailto:iats@rullet.leidenuniv.nl).

While electronic communications are preferred, regular mail may be sent to:

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## ANNUAL CONFERENCES CALENDER

CONFERENCE	APPROXIMATE DATES	ABSTRACT DEADLINE
American Academy of Religion	Weekend before Thanksgiving	1 March
American Anthropological Association	Early December	1 April
Association of American Geographers	Early April	1 September
Association for Asian Studies	Early April	1 August
South Asia Conference	3rd Weekend October	15 May