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CONFERENCE ABSTRACTS

AUTHOR

ARTICLE TITLE ORIGINS AND MIGRATIONS AMONG TIBETO-BURMAN SPEAKERS OF THE EXTENDED EASTERN HIMALAYA

HUMBOLDT UNIVERSITY IN BERLIN,
MAY 23RD TO MAY 25TH, 2008

Convened by Toni Huber and Stuart Blackburn
Submitted by Geoff Childs

Conference Report

A conference titled "Origins and Migrations among Tibeto-Burman-Speakers of the Extended Eastern Himalaya" was convened by Toni Huber and Stuart Blackburn at Humboldt University in Berlin from May 23rd to May 25th, 2008. The conference focused on questions of origins and migrations in an area tentatively defined as the "Extended Eastern Himalaya", a zone that includes the south-eastern fringes of the Tibetan plateau, the eastern Himalayan highlands, the Naga Hills, as well as the neighbouring upland regions of South-east Asia and south western China. Research on this area has thus far been fragmented by the divisions of national borders, academic disciplines, and area studies. This conference was therefore the first trans-regional, trans-ethnic, and cross-disciplinary exploration of origins and migrations among the Tibeto-Burman-speaking peoples inhabiting the Extended Eastern Himalaya. The overarching purpose was for scholars working in different areas and disciplines to share data and exchange ideas. The main intellectual foci were forms through which local populations express ideas about their origins and migrations, and scholarly analyses of the significance of origin stories and actual migrations. The conveners plan to publish the proceedings of this conference with Brill (Leiden) in late 2009 or early 2010.

Abstracts

Migration Narratives and the Environmental History of the Nyishi Tribe in Arunachal Pradesh

Aisher, Alex (Anthropology, University of Sussex)

Distinct clans and sub-clans of the Nyishi tribe, like other Tani tribes of central Arunachal Pradesh, retain a detailed orally-transmitted memory of their historical migration into and through Arunachal Pradesh. Recent research suggests the Tani tribes may have migrated across the Himalayas after the decline of the late Neolithic civilizations in China and Mongolia. Storytellers and shaman-priests of the Nyishi tribe in the uplands of Arunachal Pradesh tell of a 'great migration' that brought them to present-day

Kurung Kumey District. Events that occurred during this migration are closely linked to detailed genealogies reaching back over thirty-five generations; in oral historical terms some seven hundred years. Migration accounts tell of decisive events that signal the beginning of new institutions, new rituals and new forms of conduct. These narratives commonly include encounters and agreements with different spirits, and offer key insights into the social and environmental history of the Nyishi and other Tani tribes. This paper explores what these narratives can tell us about contemporary human-forest relationship in upland Arunachal Pradesh, and whether distinct events occurring within the migration of clans of the Nyishi tribe also signal key moments in the transformation and 'co-evolution' of Nyishi communities and the forest ecosystem such communities inhabit.

Apatani Ideas and Idioms of Origins Blackburn, Stuart (Folklore, SOAS London)

My paper will discuss the ideas that Apatanis (a tribe in central Arunachal Pradesh) have about 'origins' and the idioms in which they express those ideas. I will first look at various ways of thinking about 'origins', such as:

- genealogy: ancestry, founder cults, clan ancestors
- geography: place, homeland, migration
- cosmogony: creation myths, how world began

Of these, geography is the least important to Apatani thinking (I believe that the claim of a Tibetan homeland is largely the result of changes during the 20th century). Apatanis do not think of themselves as people from a particular place, but rather as descendants of a specific ancestor, Abo Tani. This ancestor, however, is the last phase of a longer narrative about the beginning of the world. I will identify the main elements of this 'creation myth' and then focus on Abo Tani, whose genealogy tells Apatanis everything they need to know about who they are and how they are related to others. The remainder of the paper will describe the cultural significance of Abo Tani, especially the numerous stories about his adventures.

“Where did the Question ‘Where did the so-and-so come from?’ come from?”

Burling, Robbins (Anthropology/Linguistics, University of Michigan)

Both the indigenous people of northeast India and their observers have frequently offered stories of migrations as a way of understanding the history and present distribution of the ethnic groups. The ethnographies written by colonial officials in the first half of the 20th century regularly included sections reporting the migratory origins of the tribe they described. The matter has often been raised as a question: “Where did the so-and-so come from?”

Posed in this way, the question hides a number of dubious assumptions: that ethnicity is sufficiently fixed and long lasting to survive migration; that people migrate as “tribes” that can actually shift their locations; that empty land could once be found into which a migrating tribe could move.

In my own experience in the Garo Hills, starting in the 1950’s, the belief in migration exhibited two other awkward problems. First, it was educated people who asked this question. I do not remember uneducated villagers having much interest in it. Second, the source of migration was almost always raised as a question, rather than asserted as a statement of fact or belief. People frequently asked me “Where did the Garos come from?” I was the expert and I was expected to know such things. Only once did a Garo ever describe the origin of his people with any confidence, and he was certain that they had originated in Palestine about 2,000 years ago. He gave me the dates when they passed through the cities of central Asia and then moved down through Tibet, over the Brahmaputra and to their present homeland. We should at least ask whether the curiosity about migratory origins might have been a foreign import. In the absence of records that would provide reliable history, colonial and missionary observers might have searched for stories of migration as a substitute. Hearing the question, educated local people might also have found it interesting, as they looked for ways to understand their own ethnicity in the changing colonial situation.

Even if other groups recite stories of their own migration more confidently than did the Garos in the 1950’s, the stories still clash with the fluctuating nature of ethnicity. We know of many contemporary examples where ethnicity is vigorously, sometimes violently, contested. The people we know about today sometimes deliberately shift their ethnic identification, and it seems unlikely that ethnicity was ever so fixed that it could be carried intact from one place to another or across hundreds of years. People certainly do migrate—back and forth, up and down, and every which way, but the migrations we know about involve relatively small groups of people who are fragments of tribes, never whole tribes. Furthermore, it seems likely that all the land in what is now northeast India where a human population could find food has been occupied for thousands of years. The time when there was open land for a migrating tribe to occupy is long gone. Migrants would always have had to adjust to the people who had preceded them. They might either fight with or mix with their predecessors (or more likely do a bit of both) but in either case, their ethnic identification could hardly remain unaffected. Within a few generations the ethnic identification of migrants is certain to change as they adapt to their new circumstances.

To the extent that migration stories are actually important to the indigenous people of northeast India, they have more to do with the construction of ethnicity than with the actual movement of people from one place to another. Like distinctive clothing and even distinctive language, migration stories are constructed, both as symbols of internal unity and as ways of distinguishing “us” from “them”. We should view migration stories as one expression of ethnicity. In short, they are myths.

Oral Narratives of Origin and Migration and Construction of Identities by the Tibeto-Burman Tribes of a Frontier state of India

Chaudhuri, Sarit (Anthropology, Rajiv Gandhi University)

Arunachal Pradesh, the erstwhile North East Frontier Agency (NEFA), is currently the homeland of 26 tribes and about 100 sub-tribes most of whom belongs to the Tibeto-Burman linguistic group. Sometimes, these tribes are classified into four broad cultural groups depending on shared threads of commonality as well as cultural specificities reflected through overt and covert aspects of their society and culture. Significantly, the folklore of all these Tibeto-Burman tribes contains a huge number of oral narratives linked with the intricate aspects of their origin and migration. This has provided a base in search of their roots and also promoted discourses on ethnic identities within the frontier state. The identity question in Arunachal has taken a different turn with the administrative reform in the post-colonial phase and gradually became one of the dominant issues since the achievement of statehood. The tribal situation in contemporary Arunachal has transformed a lot when we look at it historically from the colonial phase and undoubtedly various processes have been working collectively to bring such transformation among the tribes. In contemporary Arunachal we can locate various trends of identity formation among the numerically dominant as well as smaller tribes or even sub-tribes. The present paper will be an attempt to understand such ongoing heterogeneous processes of identity formation and how various oral narratives related to origin and migration of various Tibeto-Burman tribes have provided the basis to consolidate or to further redraw the ethnic boundaries in a frontier state of India that shares its border with Tibet, Burma (Myanmar), Bhutan and China.

Trans-Himalayan Migration as Process, Not Event

Childs, Geoff (Anthropology, Washington University in St. Louis)

That which is intuitively known by scholars (migration is a process) is often left unstated in academic discussions on the origins and historical migrations of ethnic groups. Such discussions sometimes neglect to engage various theoretical perspectives that have been developed to explain why people migrate in the first place. The first objective of this paper is to argue that the movements of peoples are better viewed as processes than as events. Specifically, I draw upon network theory (also known as migration systems theory) to illustrate something that is often veiled in origin

myths and oral histories: historical migrations are not necessarily about groups moving en masse from one location to another, but are protracted processes that create and sustain (or diminish and sever) sociocultural, linguistic, and economic connections between places of origin and destination. Migration as a process is of central concern when addressing the second objective of this paper, which is to discuss ways in which ethnic identities are constructed through sociocultural and economic engagements between disparate peoples whose intensity of association increases or decreases through migration. I cite examples from the literature on Sherpa history and social structure, as well as my own fieldwork in Nubri, Nepal, to illustrate the points made in this paper. The overall objective is to employ theoretical perspectives on migration and identity to better understand the Himalayas as a place where ethnic complexity has resulted from the continual movement of people and the fluidity of boundaries.

Reflections on Tibeto-Burman Population Prehistory: Possible Interpretations of Emergent Genetic Data

van Driem, George (Linguistics, University of Leiden)

No empirically supported overall language family tree has yet been determined for the Tibeto-Burman phylum, but the constituent subgroups of the family are known. At the same time, modern and historically attested Tibeto-Burman language communities show a well-defined geographical pattern of distribution. Scholars have advanced and argued diverse hypotheses about a possible location of the Tibeto-Burman homeland. Tibeto-Burman speakers, especially the millions of speakers of Sinitic languages, quite understandably share an interest in the provenance of their linguistic ancestors. Yet the linguistic and the biological ancestors of modern Tibeto-Burman language communities were not necessarily the same people. What implications do emergent population genetic findings have for our understanding of what may have happened during the long course of Tibeto-Burman prehistory?

“Where the Waters Dry Up” — The Place of Origin in Rai Myth and Ritual

Gaenszle, Martin (Anthropology, University of Vienna)

The ultimate place of origins in Rai myth is a place down in the plains, where all the rivers meet and eventually disappear in the ground. This is also the place where the ancestors come from, where the primeval beings originated and culture was established, before people migrated up into the hills. The place is often identified with the well-known pilgrimage site of Varahaksetra at the confluence of the “Seven Rivers”, but few Rai have ever travelled there in person. Many, however, have travelled there in their ritual chants, as it is an important destination in the ritual journeys along the rivers. The paper will look at this phenomenon through various texts I have collected among the Mewahang Rai (Sankhuwa Sabha) as well as, more recently, among the Puma Rai (Khotang). It looks at the ways this journey is enacted in ritual speech and raises the question how the place is conceived as part of the imaginary land-

scape. It also reflects on the more recent conceptions of Rai origins in the present political context of Nepal.

Between India and Tibet: Memba Memories of Migration

Grothmann, Kerstin (Tibetan studies, Humboldt University)

The “hidden land” (sbas yul) of Pachakshiri in the northwest of West Siang District, Arunachal Pradesh—nowadays known as Mechukha—is inhabited by a small society known as the Memba. Following boundary negotiations between India and Tibet in 1914, Mechukha fell under Indian territory although Indian administrative power never really extended there and Memba continued paying taxes to the Central Tibetan Government until the mid 1950s. This paper will focus upon oral narratives of the first migration and settlement in Mechukha of different clans from eastern Bhutan and neighbouring places, as well as from the Tibetan region of Kongpo, and then discuss them in the context of historical events of the seventeenth century, when this first migration took place according to the oral sources.

Journeys to the Place of Origins: Soul Travel and New Pilgrimage among the Idu Mishmi of Arunachal Pradesh

Heller, Gerhard (Ethnomedicine, Heidelberg)

(No abstract available)

Micro-Migrations and Our Understanding of Origins: A Case Study from the Upper Subansiri Region of the Eastern Himalaya

Huber, Toni (Tibetan studies, Humboldt University)

Local oral and written histories and the discourses of various types of scholarship (anthropology, history or linguistics, for example) often share certain propositions in common when dealing with the topic of origins and migrations. There is a common tendency to plot (and seek to prove) routes of migration or courses of transit between an assumed homeland area or origin place and a present-day location; directions of movement and itineraries are of shared importance. We also find degrees of identification between contemporary populations and their purported ancestors from past times and distant places, with the implication of continuity. There are many examples of the mutual influence of these types of propositions flowing between the accounts produced by local communities and the scholars who document them. But what role(s), if any, should these types of propositions play in scholarship, and do they really help us understand what migrations actually are and how they apparently occur? Considering data from the 20th century, I will ask this question in relation to some Tibeto-Burman-speaking communities in a major highland river valley system of the eastern Himalaya. My investigation reveals that, due to a complex host of factors (including systems of social relations and exchange, conflict, disease and local ecological cycles), many “micro-migrations”

are evident which constantly mix peoples from adjacent and more distant areas together. This type of data calls into question both propositions identified above. We might ask how common such micro-migrations and their consequences may have been throughout the entire “tribal” zone of the eastern Himalayan highlands and beyond, and how they contradict or agree with both local ideas and existing scholarship on origins and migrations in this region.

Origins, Founders, and the Institutionalisation of Donyipoloism

Ibata, Atsuko (Anthropology, Delhi University)

The Donyipolo movement arose among major tribes of the Tani group of central Arunachal Pradesh in the context of contact with outside social and religious forces during the second half of the 20th century. In part, it represents a process of restructuring faith and identity as a strategy for cultural survival, and as a compromise deal with the forces of syncretism. One dimension of the development of the Donyipolo movement is the shifting image of the progenitor being, Abotani, as the origin point from which all Tani societies are said to derive, and the role of the notions of origins and founders in general. This paper will investigate such issues through the depiction of Abotani in Donyipolo Yelam Kebang, the glorification of Talom Rukbo as the founder of the movement, the founding of Donyipolo temples, and examples of the representation of Abotani and Donyipolo in media, publishing and among NGOs, against the background of contemporary social change in central Arunachal Pradesh.

Population Mobility and Language in NE India

Jacquesson, François (Langues et Civilisations de Tradition Orale, Centre National de la Recherche Scientifique)

The paper will describe (1) three cases of modification in the NE India language geography: the Tai-Ahom language replacement; the Mishing move downwards; the Moran dialect death, (2) two opposite patterns of communication (Naga vs. Tani) corresponding to different speeds in language change, and (3) the Brahmaputra Project at LACITO (CNRS).

Origins and Returns: A Comparative Study of Myths and Rituals concerning Ethnogenesis and the Souls of the Dead among the Naxi and Nuosu of Southwest China

McKhann, Charles (Anthropology, Whitman College)

The Naxi and Nuosu (Yi) are two relatively closely related Tibeto-Burman groups in southwest China. Along with several other groups in the area, they have myths of origin that emphasize migration from heaven to earth of first progenitors, and of subsequent migration and distribution over the land of lineage groups linked to their descendants. Both also employ funerary rites emphasizing the return of the dead along these carefully delineated ‘ancestral roads’ to a place where all ancestors are thought to dwell in eternal

happiness. This paper contrasts the two models espoused by Naxi and Nuosu ritual specialists with an eye to their implications for understanding ideals of history, lineage and social structure, and geography as sacred space.

Oral Histories and the ‘Origins’ of Current Peoples: Dynamic Ethnogenesis, with Remarks upon the Limitations of Language-Family Subgrouping

Lehman, F.K. (Chit Hlaing) (Anthropology, University of Illinois)

I shall, once again, examine the current controversies in the theory of ethnic categories, focusing upon the liability of categorization in the context of changing inter-group relations. My main point will be to demonstrate that, in general at least, the farther back in time we go the less likely it is that we can even ask where ‘this particular people’ was, even given migration evidence. I shall also go into the arguments about whether various upland groups really did, as their oral traditions claim, once have a kingdom of their own—examining the actual reasons for such persistent claims. Finally, I shall try to examine effects of this upon evidence used in linguistic sub-grouping. My materials will come largely from work, much of it my own, on Chin, Kachin, Kayah and Shan.

North by Northeast

Oppitz, Michael (Anthropology, University of Zürich)

A comparison of a variety of origin stories, in which a number of—mainly unrelated local societies of the Himalaya—all claim to have originated in a place north of the area in which they live today. Such societies are: the Gurung, the Ghale, the Tamang, the Sherpa, the Naxi and the Qiang.

The Language, Culture, Environment and Origins of Proto-Tani Speakers: What is Knowable, and What is Not (yet)

Post, Mark (Linguistics, La Trobe University)

The Tani languages form a relatively compact and well-defined branch of Tibeto-Burman. The vast majority are spoken within a more-or-less contiguous area stretching throughout most of mountainous central Arunachal Pradesh state, North-East India, and extending into South-Eastern Tibet in the North and the Assam floodplain in the South. However, very few people—including foreign and local scholars, as well as most Tani tribespeople themselves—believe that the present distribution of Tani languages and tribes corresponds well with the historical state-of-affairs; rather, it seems likely both that “ancestral Tani” speakers entered their present area of concentration from “somewhere else”, and that much of the present language distribution must be accounted for with reference to progressive, ongoing (mainly southward) migrations of Tani language-speaking populations.

While the overall bulk of comparative evidence does not currently support location of a Proto-Tani homeland with any real geographical precision, evidence from Tani-internal comparative

lexical, grammatical and prosodic analysis and historical reconstruction suggests that the following very general characterizations can be made:

Proto-Tani was probably: 1) spoken in a mountainous area 2) not (or only loosely) in contact with Indo-Aryan languages 3) not (or only loosely) in contact with syllable tone languages such as J/Singpho and Tai.

Subsequent diversification was partly attributable to language-internal factors (different “reifications” of variation following population splits), and partly attributable to progressively-increasing proximity to, and, ultimately, intense contact with speakers of Indo-Aryan languages.

This paper will review the Tani-internal linguistic evidence for these views, and will also suggest some of the ways in which future comparative linguistic and anthropological research (within Tani and, especially, beyond) will help to fill them out, test their validity and increase their precision.

Models of Origins and Migrations in Contemporary Ethnic Discourse in Burma

Sadan, Mandy (History, SOAS London)

The Jinghpaw people of Burma practiced a highly elaborated form of oral ritual in which ideas were expressed and narratives constructed of origins and migrations. The paper will present an overview of these local forms, referencing practices conducted in both ritual and colloquial Jinghpaw idiom. Attention will be given to the ways in which these narratives and practices were amenable to local adaptation, particularly where the integration of a non-Jinghpaw community into a Jinghpaw ritual sphere was necessitated, for example to accommodate the continued migration history of one community brought newly into contact with another. The paper will then explore how postcolonial patterns of migration in contexts of intense militarization impacted upon these practices and rendered them important in contemporary cultural politics as a means of delineating the boundaries of ‘Kachin’ historic-ness. These current contexts of politicization, including perceptions of literate vs. non-literate and Christian vs. non-Christian accounts of Jinghpaw/Kachin history, will be outlined to elaborate the significance of models of origins and migrations in contemporary ethnic discourse in Burma.

Neither Buddhists nor Barbarians: Contesting discourses on the origins of the Xifan in Southwest China

Wellens, Koen (Anthropology, University of Oslo)

This paper is concerned with the context in which oral traditions are maintained, changed or lost within the modern Chinese state. The focus will be a discussion about the interplay between official state discourses on ethnic identity and stories on origins collected among the Namuyi and the Premi, two Tibeto-Burman speaking groups living in Southwest China.

Both the Namuyi and the Premi are close neighbours and live in a relatively isolated mountainous area straddling the south-

western part of Sichuan Province and north-western Yunnan. Relatively little is known about the history of these groups and different versions of their origins are contested in both popular and academic debates. The two groups—speaking mutually unintelligible languages and having distinct ritual traditions—were both, until a few decades ago, called Xifan by their local Han Chinese neighbours. This term means “Western Barbarians” and it constituted a default category for peoples that were wedged in between the Tibetans and the Yi or Nosu rather than a specific ethnonym. Besides the Premi and the Namuyi, the Xifan comprised also a handful of other Tibeto-Burman speaking groups such as the Ersu, Liru, Shimi and Duoxu, with populations from one or two thousand to a few tens of thousands. The term Xifan appears also in Chinese historical sources where it has been used variously to refer to non-Han Chinese living in what is now Western China, more specifically to Tibeto-Burmans in this region but also to Tibetans in general. After the Communists established firm control of Southwest China more than half a century ago all the Xifan became officially classified as Zangzu, that is, Tibetans. The only exception was the Premi in Yunnan who became recognised as a separate ethnic minority. This decision by a hegemonic state proved a great asset for the Premi, not only in maintaining but also in promoting cultural distinctiveness in a rapidly modernising society. Although several of the other Xifan groups up to this day also have been able to survive as culturally distinct groups, their future seems much more uncertain. Because a very pervasive Chinese official discourse on ethnic origins and identity is communicated through state education, the media and, even to some extent, the social sciences, it is very difficult to express and promote diverging or contesting versions of these issues. The Namuyi, as “official” Tibetans, have no politically acceptable platform to take action for preserving or promoting their fast disappearing indigenous tradition. Furthermore, as shown and discussed in this paper, the official versions of ethnic origins tend to become internalised and reflected in the oral traditions themselves.

The Role of Migration Stories in the Construction of a Collective Naga Identity

Wettstein, Marion (Anthropology, University of Zürich)

The aim of this paper is to discuss, amongst other things, interpretations of Naga migration stories as expressed by local scholars, who in most cases are situated in the fields of (Baptist) theology and/or sociology, and often influenced by political activism in the Naga independence struggle.

ASSOCIATION FOR ASIAN STUDIES ANNUAL MEETING

ATLANTA, APRIL 3-6, 2008

Matthew Kapstein (University of Chicago) organized a roundtable titled **Tibetan Studies in the Undergraduate Curriculum: Programs, Resources, and Requirements**. Discussants were Patricia Schiaffini (Southwestern University), Sara L McClintock (Emory University), Gray Tuttle (Columbia University), David Germano (University of Virginia), and Jacob P. Dalton (Yale University). The focus was the current state of undergraduate programs in which Tibetan Studies are introduced, the adequacy of available educational resources, and apparent desiderata.

Elisabeth Benard (University of Puget Sound) organized a panel titled **Opportunities and Obstacles: Lives of Tibetan Women**. Papers were presented by Elisabeth Benard, "Tibetan Female Adepts: Sakya Jetsunmas"; Anne-Laure Cromphout (L'Université Libre de Bruxelles), "Hybrid Female Representations in Tibetan Music"; Françoise Robin (INALCO), "From Subject Matter to Autonomous Subjects Who Matter: The Rise of Women on Today's Tibetan Literary Scene", and Sienna Craig (Dartmouth College), "Women in Tibetan Medical Education: Notes on the Shifting Roles of Women in Tibetan Medical Education."

Dibyesh Anand (University of Westminster) organized a panel titled **Who's Afraid of China's Tibet?: Imagining Tibet's Future in a Changing World**. Papers were presented by Lobsang Sangay (Harvard University), "Negotiating with Care: Roadblocks to a Political Solution Acceptable to China and the Tibetan Peoples"; P. Christiaan Klieger (California Academy of Sciences), "Envisioning a Tibet Outside Tibet"; Bhuchung K. Tsering (International Campaign for Tibet), "From Tsampa Eaters to Political Symbol: Evolution of Tibetan Identity in Tibet and Outside"; and Dibyesh Anand, "The Limited World: Tibet and the 'Sovereignty' Problematic."

Kurtis R. Schaeffer (University of Virginia) organized a panel titled **The Contours of Tibetan Auto/biography**. Papers were presented by Kurtis R. Schaeffer, "Charting Tibetan Auto/biography"; Benjamin Bogin (Georgetown University), "The Style of Pema Trinle's Life"; Jann Ronis (University of Virginia), "Autobiographical Style and Social Life in Degé"; and Andrew Quintman (Princeton University), "Liberation or Deliberation? The Form of the Content in Doring Tenzin Paljor's Autobiography."

Other conference papers pertaining to the Himalayan region included those by Gerard Postiglione (The University of Hong Kong), "Remaking China's Tibetans for Civic Roles in a Harmonious Society"; Graham K. Brown (Oxford), "Is Greed Really Dead? Donor Responses to Conflict in Nepal"; Susan Hangen (Ramapo College), "Transnational Dimensions of Nepal's Indigenous Nationalities Movement"; Lopita Nath (University of the Incarnate Word), "The Strength of Weak Ties: Role of Networks in Nepali Migration to South and Southeast Asia 1900-2000"; Tina Harris (CUNY Graduate Center), "Of Wool and Washing Machines: Transformations in Himalayan Trading Networks"; and Mona Bhan (DePauw University), "Defense or Development?: Human Security, National Security, and Militarization in Ladakh (Kashmir, India)."

For abstracts of these and other papers from the conference visit: <http://www.aasianst.org/absts/2008abst/main-toc.htm>

37TH ANNUAL CONFERENCE ON SOUTH ASIA

MADISON, WISCONSIN, OCTOBER 2008

A two part panel titled **The Changing Face of Ethnic Movements in Nepal** was chaired by Susan Hangen (Ramapo College) and Mahendra Lawoti (Western Michigan University). Papers included Susan Hangen, "The Changing Forms and Strategies of Nepal's Indigenous Nationalities Movement"; Pramod Kantha (Wright State University), "Understanding Nepal's Madhesi Movement: Internal and

External Dimensions"; Mollica Dastider (Nehru Memorial Museum and Library), "The Muslim Madhesi: Coexistence of Religion and Ethnicity?"; Uddhab Pyakurel (Jawaharlal University), "Exclusion and Assertion of Dalit and the State Response After the Second Peoples' Movement"; Mahendra Lawoti, "Path Dependency, State Consolidation and Marginalization in Nepal: Historical Roots of Contemporary

Exclusion”; Brigitte Steinmann (Université Paul Valéry-Montpellier), “Revolution and the State in Nepal: Patterns and Rituals of Integration in a New Civil Society”; Indra Adhikari (Jawaharlal Nehru University), “Nepali Army in Transition: Journey from Feudal to Inclusive and Democratic Institution”; and Mallika Shakya (World Bank), “In Search of Pragmatism Within Politics: Business Elite and an Ethnic Movement in Nepal”.

Sara Schneiderman (Cornell University) chaired a panel titled **Shifting Identities in the New Nepal**. Papers were given by Megan Adamson Sijapati (Gettysburg College), “The National Muslim Forum Nepal and a Nepali Muslim ‘Nation’: Experiences of Conflict, Formations of Identity”; Steven Folmar (Wake Forest University), “Hill Dalits, Identity and Nationalism: Local Perspectives from West Nepal”; Erika Hoffmann (Oberlin College), “Many Names for Mother: The Etho-Linguistic Politics of Deafness in Nepal”; and Monika Timilsina (Tribhuvan University), “Nation and Identity at the Frontier: The Case Study of Tribeni in Nepal.”

A panel organized by Sienna Craig (Dartmouth College) dealt with the topic of **Labor Migration and Social Change in South Asia**. Papers were given by Sara Shneiderman (Cornell University), “Circular Identities: migration, citizenship and the challenges of cross-border belonging for the Thangmi of Nepal and India”; Sienna Craig, “Remittance and Remembrance: Identity and Economy between New York and Mustang, Nepal”; Winifred Poster (Washington University in St. Louis), “Saying ‘Good Morning’ in the Night: Virtual Migration and the Temporal Discontinuities of Indian Call Centers”; and Geoff Childs (Washington University in St. Louis), “Gender and Wage-Labor Migration in Contemporary Tibet.”

John Metz (Northern Kentucky University) chaired a panel titled **Managing Human Impacts on Forests in Highland South Asia**. Papers were presented by Teri Allendorf (University of Wisconsin-Madison), “Local Communities and Dry Forests in South Asia”; Keshav Bhattarai (University of Central Missouri), “Spatial Driving Forces of Deforestation in Nepal’s Central Development Region”; Ashok Regmi (Arizona State University), “Governing Forest Resources in Nepal—Looking Beyond Panaceas”; and Krishna Roka (Pennsylvania State University), “Forest and Politics: The Future of Forests Under Federalism in Nepal.”

Mark Leichty (University of Illinois—Chicago) chaired a panel titled **An Exploration into Nepali Cultural**

Conceptions of the Category of Youth. Papers were presented by Amanda Snellinger (Cornell University), “Imperfect Replication: Conceptions of Youth and the Form They Take in Nepali Political Culture”; Anna Stirr (Columbia University), “Rodhi Ghar to Rodhi Bar: The Commercialization of Gurung Tradition in the Nepali Music Industry”; and Rosalind Evans (Oxford University), “The Impact of Political Conflict on Bhutanese Refugee Concepts of Childhood and Youth.”

Haley Duschinski (Ohio University) chaired a panel titled **Ethnographic Perspectives on Sovereignty and Statehood in Kashmir**. Papers were given by Saiba Varma (Cornell University), “Healing Kashmir? The Emergence of Psychiatry as a Mode of Redressal”; Ankur Datta (London School of Economics), “Living in a Place of Exception: The Kashmiri Pandit Migrant Camp and Politics”; Cabeiri Robinson (University of Washington), “Bodies on the Border: Kashmiri Citizen–Subjects and the Territory of the State”, and Shubh Mathur (Franklin Pierce University), “The Applicability of International Human Rights Laws to the Kashmir Conflict: An Anthropological View.”

In addition, several scholars presented individual papers in other panels that are of interest to scholars of the Himalayan region. These included papers by Rakesh Bhatt (University of Illinois), “Kashmiri Language in Diaspora: Folk Beliefs, Evaluation, and Attrition”; Huma Dar (University of California, Berkeley), “Dangerous Desires: Sexualized Territories, Seductive Terrorists, and Castrating Women”; Nancy Cook and David Butz (Brock University), “Life in the Fast Lane: Traveling a New Road in Shimshal, Pakistan”; Townsend Middleton (Cornell University), “Anxious Belongings: The History of Affect and the Affect of History in the Darjeeling Hills”; Debarati Sen (Rutgers University), “From Illegal to Organic: Spatial Politics of Fair Trade–Organic Tea Production in Darjeeling, India”; Mona Bhan (DePauw University), “Insecure Lands, Secure Territories: Shifting Ideologies of Land and Labor in Ladakh, India”; Gautama Vajracharya (University of Wisconsin-Madison), “Nepali Fountains: Natural Phenomena in Art”; and R. S. Fonia (Archaeological Survey of India), “Trade Networks and Settlement in the Himalayas.”

For abstracts of these papers, visit the following: <http://southasiainconference.wisc.edu/archive/index.html>