Conference
Deities, Spirits and Demons in Vernacular Beliefs and Rituals in Asia
University of Tartu
November 8–10, 2017

Wednesday, Nov 8th, 2017

14:00–15:00 Registration (lobby of the University of Tartu main building, Ülikooli 18)

15:00–15:15 Opening of the conference

(University of Tartu main building, Ülikooli 18, lecture hall 139)

15:15–16:45 Session I: Ambivalent ontologies: Afterlife in South Asian traditions

(University of Tartu main building, Ülikooli 18, lecture hall 139. Chair: Ülo Valk)

15:15–16:15 Amy L. Allocco (Elon University, USA): “Protect us! Support us! You are our family deity!”: Ritual relationships with the dead in Tamil South India (plenary lecture)

16:15–16:45 Brian K. Pennington (Elon University, USA): The once-and-never-dead: The Garhwali Devta of Uttarakhand, India

16:45–17:15 Coffee/tea

17:15–19:15 Session II: The non-human others: Theorising supernatural powers

(University of Tartu main building, Ülikooli 18, lecture hall 139. Chair: Brian K. Pennington)

17:15–17:45 Frank J. Korom (Boston University, USA): Weathering the storm: Environmental catastrophes and divine wrath in a Bengali bardic tradition

17:45–18:15 Stefano Beggiora (Ca’Foscari University of Venice, Italy): Monsters, ghosts and demons in Himalayan folklore: An ethnographic survey

18:15–18:45 Davide Torri (University of Heidelberg, Germany): A night at the watermill. An enquiry into non-human inhabitants of the Upper Helambu in Nepal

18:45–19:15 Fabio Armand (University Grenoble-Alpes, France): The Himalayan folklore of succubus Kichkann: Towards a neurocognitive anthropology of our ‘imaginaive’ phantom-bodies

19:15–21.15 Opening reception (University Café, Ülikooli 20)
Thursday, Nov 9th, 2017

9:00–11:00 Session III: Divinities, destinies and ritual strategies: Controlling deities in Hinduism

(Ülikooli 16, lecture hall 212. Chair: Amy L. Allocco)

9:00–10:00 Fabrizio M. Ferrari (University of Chester, UK): Demonic or divine? Ghaṇṭākaraṇa in Sanskrit and Bengali literature (plenary lecture)

10:00–10:30 Audrius Beinorius (Vilnius University, Lithuania): When stars turn into demons: The practice of a medical astrology in West Bengal

10:30–11:00 Alexis Avdeeff (University of Poitiers, France): Celestial hierarchies, labile pantheons. Tamil Hinduism through the prism of divination

11:00–11:30 Coffee/tea

11:30–13:00 Session IV: Local goddesses in South Asia: Rituals of power and secrecy

(Ülikooli 16, lecture hall 212. Chair: Frank J. Korom)

11:30–12:00 Lidia Guzy (University College Cork (UCC), National University of Ireland): The ambivalent powers of vernacular goddesses in India with special reference to Odisha

12:00–12:30 Uwe Skoda (Aarhus University, Denmark): Goddess Basuli, Chhou and the Raja. Cheitra Parba rituals in a former princely state in Odisha

12:30–13:00 Margaret Lyngdoh (University of Tartu): Klingmekar: A stigmatised, secret and powerful deity among the Karbi and Khasi in North Eastern India

13:00–14:30 Lunch (University Café, Ülikooli 20)

14:30–16:30 Parallel sessions V & VI

Session V: Conceptualising life and afterlife: Perspectives from East Asia

(Ülikooli 16, lecture hall 212. Chair: Alevtina Solovyeva)

14:30–15:00 Jinseok Seo (University of Latvia): The deification process of contemporary political characters in the context of Korean vernacular beliefs a.k.a. Korean shamanism

15:00–15:30 Fumihiko Kobayashi (independent researcher, USA): Saru Gami demons and Yama'i no Kami deities are still out there! Stories of monkey demons and deadly disease deities in Japanese folk culture tradition
15:30–16:00 Kusum Gopal (United Nations, India): “Life is temporary, death is a return”, Song ga Thac Ve: Integrated cosmologies of the living and the dead in Vietnam

16:00–16:30 Nina Grigoreva (National Research University Higher School of Economics, Saint-Petersburg, Russian Federation): The conception of the tree of Si through the narratives and rituals of the Muong in North Vietnam

Session VI: Vernacular Hinduism, indigenous religions and social realities

(Ülikooli 16, lecture hall 214. Chair: Uwe Skoda)

14:30–15:00 Irene Majo Garigliano (Centre national de la recherche scientifique, France): “God will slowly go away from here”. Vernacular beliefs, nostalgia and the expanding pilgrimage to the Kāmākhyā Temple (Assam)

15:00–15:30 Devleena Ghosh (University of Technology, Sydney, Australia): “The bones of our mother”: Adivasis, forests and coal mining in India

15:30–16:00 Svetlana Ryzhakova (Institute of Ethnology and Anthropology, Russian Academy of Sciences): Possession, devotion, performance: borders and interconnections of personal self-possession, worship and artistic experience. Bhoota-kolam (daiva-nema) in South Kannada (Karnataka)

16:00–16:30 Marianne Qvortrup Fibiger (Aarhus University, Denmark): The deities, spirits and demons move along: A case-study among diaspora Hindus living in Mauritius

16:30–17:00 Coffee/tea

17:00–18:30 Parallel sessions VII & VIII

Session VII: Confronting and controlling the supernatural in Mongolia

(Ülikooli 16, lecture hall 212. Chair: Stefano Beggiora)

17:00–17:30 Alevtina Solovyeva (University of Tartu): Deities and demons on Mongolian roads

17:30–18:00 Iuliia Liakhova (Russian State University for the Humanities, Moscow): Sprinkle, offer and pray: Daily rituals in Mongolian everyday life

18:00–18:30 Dmitrii Nosov (Institute of Oriental Manuscripts, Russian Academy of Sciences, St. Petersburg): “The Mighty old man who never existed”: Motif of a ritual, interrupted by supernatural creatures in the folktales and legends of the Buryats and Mongols
Session VIII: Deities, places and identities: Exploring boundaries and belonging
(Ülikooli 16, lecture hall 214. Chair: Margaret Lyngdoh)

17:00–17:30 Reep Pandi Lepcha (Jadavpur University, India/University of Tartu): Emancipation of mortals to protective divinities in Mutanchi narratives: Negotiating ownership of tradition, gender, and identity struggle in Sikkim

17:30–18:00 Kikee D. Bhutia (University of Tartu): Contested narratives of the deities of Nga Dag monastery in Sikkim

18:00–18:30 Xuan Wang (Memorial University of Newfoundland, St. John's, Canada/University of Tartu): Taoist Guandi Temple, Buddha Butter Sculpture Assembly and Multi-Religious Beliefs in Xiahe Tibetan Autonomous County in China

19:00 Conference dinner

Friday, Nov 10th, 2017

9:00–11:00 Session IX: Supernatural beings in Tibet and the Himalaya: Echoes from textual and ethnographic sources  (Ülikooli 16, lecture hall 212. Chair: Valentina Punzi)

9:00–10:00 Charles Ramble (École Pratique des Hautes Études, Paris, France): From ‘Greatest Leaders’ to ‘Gnomes’: The decline of Tibetan vampires and the rituals for their subjugation (plenary lecture)

10:00–10:30 Daniel Berounsky (Charles University, Prague, Czech Republic): Tö (gtod) beings and their characteristics in early Tibetan Tö collection (Gtod 'bum)

10:30–11:00 Alexander K. Smith (Friedrich-Alexander-Universität Erlangen-Nürnberg, Germany): Assailing the demon’s fortress: Hierarchy and opposition in Bon rope divination

11:00–11:30 Coffee/tea

11:30–13:00 Session X: Deities in action: Narratives of destroying and healing power in Tibetan communities (Ülikooli 16, lecture hall 212. Chair: Baburam Saikia)

11:30–12:00 Per Kværne (University of Oslo, Norway): The sku-bla, 'soul', of the Tibetan Emperors (7th-9th century CE) and its subsequent metamorphosis

12:00–12:30 Valentina Punzi (L’Orientale University of Napoli, Italy/University of Tartu): Burying gold, digging the past: The Ma Bufang regime and contemporary Tibetan-Hui ethnic tensions in Amdo (PRC)
12:30–13:00 Susannah Deane (University of Glasgow, UK): Exploring narratives of spirit-caused illness within a contemporary Tibetan community

**13:00–14:30 Lunch (University Café, Ülikooli 20)**

**14:30–16:30 Session XI: Controlling, taming and communicating with deities and spirits**

(Ülikooli 16, lecture hall 212. Chair: Gregory D. Alles)

14:30–15:00 Olga Mazo (Russian State University for the Humanities): Spirits of the earth (Tudi shen) in the everyday life of modern Macau (China)

15:00–15:30 Serena Bindi (Université Paris Descartes, France): When the dead linger in our senses. Sensory experiences and the presence of the dead in Garhwal, Uttarakhand

15:30–16:00 Diana Riboli (Panteio University, Greece): The deities’ upraising and the invisible god. Shamanism and Christianity among the Chepang (Nepal)

16:00–16:30 Cristiana Turini (University of Macerata, Italy): The power to confront demons in the context of Naxi culture: The role of the dongba and his paraphernalia

**16:30–17:00 Coffee/tea**

**17:00–18:30 Session XII: Dealing with the supernatural: Varieties of vernacular practice**

(Ülikooli 16, lecture hall 212. Chair: Lidia Guzy)

17:00–17:30 Laur Vallikivi (University of Tartu): The life and death of spirit objects: Nenets reindeer herders’ relations with the Khekhe in arctic Russia

17:30–18:00 Gregory D. Alles (McDaniel College, USA): The vernacular in motion: Jagats, deities, and ancestors in eastern Chhotaudepur district

18:00–18:30 Ülo Valk (University of Tartu): Epistemological uncertainty and narrative variation: On supernatural encounters in Assam

18:30 Closing of the conference

The conference is organized by the Department of Estonian and Comparative Folklore, University of Tartu, in co-operation with the Department of Asian, African and Mediterranean Studies, “L’Orientale” University of Naples; Asian Centre, University of Tartu; Tartu Nefa Group, and the Estonian Society for the Study of Religions.