

PILGRIMAGES AND SANCTUARIES: ART, MUSIC AND RITUALS

11-12 November 2011

Organized by
The Centro Incontri Umani
Monte Verità, Ascona, Switzerland



Conveners:

Thierry Zarcone, CNRS - GSRL / EPHE, Paris
Pedram Khosronejad, University of St Andrews, Scotland
Angela Hobart, University College, London



with the participation of
the “Groupe Sociétés Religions Laïcité”
Centre National de la Recherche Scientifique
Ecole Pratique des hautes Etudes – Université de la Sorbonne
and of
the Department of Social Anthropology, University of St Andrews

PROGRAM

THURSDAY 10 NOVEMBER

19:00 Registration

19:30 Dinner

FRIDAY 11 NOVEMBER

9:30 Opening: **Angela HOBART** (London University College / director of the Centro Incontri Umani)

9:45 Introducing the topic of the conference: **Pedram KHOSRONEJAD** (St Andrews University) and **Thierry ZARCONE** (CNRS – GSRL / EPHE, Paris)

Session 1: Musique, Songs and Nature

Chair: Angela Hobart

10:00 **Razia SULTANOVA** (Central Asian Forum, University of Cambridge, UK)
Devotional chanting in Uzbek and Kazakh Pilgrimages: (Shahimardan, Bukhara, Turkestan)

10:35 **Saskia KERSENBOOM** (Amsterdam University, The Netherlands)
Lady of Great Bliss

11:10 Morning Coffee

11:40 **Richard BLURTON** (Dept of Asia, British Museum, London)
Pilgrimage to Banggajang: lake-dwelling goddesses and their devotees in the eastern Himalayas

12:15 **Charles RAMBLE** (Oriental Institute, University of Oxford)
'Objets trouvés': The transformation of nature into art in Tibetan pilgrimages

12:40- 1:15 Questions and discussion

13:30 Lunch Break

Session 2: Sacred artefacts

Chair: Pedram Khosronejad

15:00 **Michel BOIVIN** (CNRS - CEIAS / EHESS, Paris)
Building a local culture in a Sufi centre: the kishti and other artefacts in Sehwan Sharif (Pakistan)

15:35 **Alexandre PAPAS** (CNRS - CETOBAC / EHESS, Paris)
Steles, relics and photographs in the Muslim shrines of Northwest China (Qinghai, Gansu)

16:10 Afternoon Tea

16:40 **Sanjay GARG** (SAARC Cultural Centre, Colombo, Sri Lanka)
Pilgrims' memorabilia in the social landscape of India

17:15 **Thierry ZARCONE** (CNRS - GSRL / EPHE, Paris)
Flags and ritual banners at shrines in Asian Islam (Central Asia, Xinjiang, India)

17:50 -18:30 Speakers's panel – Questions and discussion

19:30 Dinner

SATURDAY 12 NOVEMBER

Session 3: Images and representation

Chair: Thierry Zarcone

9:30 **Hümeýra ULUDAG** (Istanbul University, Turkey)
Shrines and the culture of pilgrimages in the Ottoman visual material

10:05 **Pedram KHOSRONEJAD** (University of St Andrews)
Curtains of heaven: celestial and devotional mural paintings of Iranian pilgrimage

10:40 Morning Coffee

11:00 **Isabelle CHARLEUX** (CNRS - GSRL / EPHE, Paris)
Sacred souvenirs of 19th-20th century Mongol pilgrimages to Wutaishan (China)

11:35 Speakers's panel – Questions and discussion

12:10 Conclusion: **Pierre-Jean LUIZARD** (CNRS - GSRL / EPHE, Paris)

12:30 Closing: **Angela HOBART; Pedram KHOSRONEJAD; Thierry ZARCONE**

13:00 Lunch Break

ABSTRACTS

Michel BOIVIN (CNRS - CEIAS / EHESS, Paris)

Michel Boivin is Research Fellow at the Centre for Indian and South Asian Studies (CNRS-EHESS) and he teaches Contemporary History of South Asia. He specializes in the nineteenth- and twentieth-century history of Muslim societies belonging to an area straddling current-day Pakistan and India, roughly from Karachi to Mumbai. His work is informed by texts, historical anthropology and material culture. He has just published *Artefacts of Devotions: A Sufi Repertoire of the Qalandariyya in Sehwan Sharif, Sindh (Pakistan)* (Karachi, Oxford University Press, 2011).

Building a local culture in a Sufi centre: the kishti and other artefacts in Sehwan Sharif (Pakistan)

Sufism in the Indian Subcontinent is usually introduced through Imperial centres like Nizamuddin in Delhi or Muinuddin Chishti in Ajmer. The art and culture thus produced are therefore closely attached to imperial power, be it the Delhi Sultanate or the Moghul Empire. My contention, however, is that innovative clues can be adduced as evidence of regional and local approaches. My lecture focuses on the Sufi centre of Sehwan Sharif (Pakistan) where the Sufi Lal Shahbaz Qalandar (d. 1274) is buried. It will study a number of artefacts, usually represented as the Sufi's relics, as material goods embodied in a number of narratives. The artefacts are also ritual tools which reflect negotiations between different categories of local people such as sayyids and non-sayyids, Sunnis and Shias, Muslims and Hindus, men, women, *khadras* etc. Briefly, the study of the artefacts informs us on how a local 'system' is working.

Richard BLURTON (Dept of Asia, British Museum, London)

T. Richard Blurton is head of the South Asian section in the Department of Asia at the British Museum, London. He has curatorial charge of the late medieval, early modern and modern collections from both South and South East Asia. He carries out research on these collections and has a special knowledge of the department's collection history. Richard has conducted active programmes of contemporary collecting, most notably in eastern and north-eastern India. His recent publications are: *Bengali Myths* (London, British Museum Press, 2006); *Burma: Art and Archaeology*, with A. Green (ed.), (London, British Museum Press, 2002); *Burma and the Art of Lacquer*, with R. Issacs, (Bangkok, 2000), and *Hindu Art* (London, British Museum Press, 1992).

The pilgrimage to Banggajang: lake-dwelling goddesses and their devotees in the eastern Himalayas

This paper discusses the previously unrecorded pilgrimage to a group of high altitude lakes located in the hills above the Se-La. This pass at 13,000 feet separates western Arunachal Pradesh from Tawang District and the onward route to Tsona in south-eastern Tibet. The lakes are imagined as the residences of the goddesses Dorje Phagmo and Palden Lhamo, while the surrounding landscape is impregnated with divine and cosmic presence – all of which is pointed out to pilgrims as they make the pilgrimage circuit. In this, the Banggajang pilgrimage fits into the same type as the much more substantial landscape pilgrimage that has been recorded to the east, at Tsa-ri, by Toni Huber.

The pilgrimage to Banggajang has both a historic and a present manifestation, and both elements will for the first time – and with some trepidation – be placed in an overview of the well-known Tibetan notion of mountain and lake veneration and the accommodation of this activity within a Buddhist world-view. There is some evidence that the pilgrimage acted not only as a spiritual activity but also as an economic and indeed a cultural activity, and this will be presented.

Isabelle CHARLEUX (CNRS - GSRL / EPHE, Paris)

Isabelle Charleux is a researcher at the CNRS, GSRL (Groupe Sociétés, Religions, Laïcités), Paris. Her area of research is the Mongol's pilgrimages and religious material culture at the Chinese frontier. Her main publications are: *Temples et monastères de Mongolie-Intérieure* (Paris: 2006) and, as co-editor with R. Hamayon and S. Pearce, *Representing Power in Ancient Inner Asia* (Bellingham, Western Washington University, 2010). She has also authored many articles and chapters, including: 'Chinggis Khan: ancestor, Buddha or Shaman? On the uses and abuses of the portrait of Chinggis Khan', *Mongolian Studies* 31 (2009); 'The Khan's City : Kökeqota and the role of a capital city in Mongolian state formation' (in D. Sneath, ed., *Imperial Statecraft: Political Forms and Techniques of Governance in Inner Asia, Sixth–Twentieth Centuries* (Bellingham, Western Washington University, 2007); 'Copies de Bodhgayā en Asie orientale: les stupas de type Wuta à Pékin et Kökeqota (Mongolie-Intérieure)', *Arts Asiatiques* 61 (2006).

Sacred souvenirs of nineteenth- and twentieth-century Mongol pilgrimages to Wutaishan (China)

Mount Wutaishan was an important centre of religious shopping for Mongol pilgrims, who purchased there various kinds of objects, from rosaries, statuettes, good-luck tokens and mass-produced prints and maps up to expensive icons. Back home, these 'relics' of the holy shrine served to maintain a physical connection with the charisma of the site. This presentation will examine three kinds of sacred souvenirs – maps, prints of Shakyamuni's footprints and *thangkas* – to question their different functions and uses, and the lasting influence they had on Mongol Buddhist art.

Sanjay GARG (SAARC Cultural Centre, Colombo, Sri Lanka)

Dr Sanjay Garg is a historian of South Asia, specializing in economic and monetary history, currency and coinage, architecture and archival studies. His research findings have been widely published in print and multimedia, including eight books and over eighty research papers. He has served the National Archives of India for 23 years as the Assistant Archivist, Archivist, Assistant Director of Archives and Deputy Director of Archives. Dr Garg has also been a Visiting Faculty Member, an Examiner and Post-graduate Supervisor of the School of Archival Studies, National Archives of India, the Institute for Secretariat Management and Practice, and the Bhogilal Leherchand Institute of Indology, all in New Delhi and at the Dinesh Mody Institute for Numismatics and Archaeology, Mumbai University. In 1998, Dr Garg was awarded the Charles Wallace Fellowship at the Fitzwilliam Museum, University of Cambridge, to prepare a catalogue of Indian coins. He was also a Resident Fellow at the Centro Incontri Umani, Ascona, Switzerland in 2009. Dr Garg has a Ph.D. in History from the Centre for Historical Studies, Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi; a MA in History from the St John's

College, Agra University; and a Diploma in Archival Studies from the National Archives of India, New Delhi.

Pilgrims' memorabilia in the social landscape of India

India is a land of diverse religious faiths and practices. It is the place of origin of four religions – Hinduism, Buddhism, Jainism and Sikhism – and a congenial abode for almost all the religions of the world, be it the oldest, such as Judaism, Zoroastrianism, Christianity, Islam, or one of the newest, like Baha'ism. The shrines of these religions dot the cultural landscape of the country, and from antiquity these have served as pilgrimage centres for devotees. One of the traditions associated with pilgrimage in India is the carrying back of blessings of the sacred site in some tangible form. These range from holy *prasād* (eatables offered by a devotee at a shrine and generally returned after being blessed), sacred water and holy ash from incense, to charms, amulets, statuettes and jewellery. This tradition could be studied from a functionalist point of view, in which the memorializing of the pilgrimage and sharing of the divine blessings with one's kith and kin appear to be the prime objects of the pilgrim; or from a philosophical standpoint, in which the pilgrim seeks to associate himself permanently with the sacred site.

This paper will explore this tradition of 'pilgrims' memorabilia' in the cross-cultural and inter-religious settings of India by focusing on the religious tokens commonly known as *Rāmtankās* (lit. 'Money of Lord Rama'). Previously confined to Hinduism, the prevalence of these religious tokens amongst the Hindu pilgrims has prompted Islamic, Sikh and other religious communities to devise their own. These tokens have provided not only a convenient and affordable medium of expression for the popular art and religious beliefs of the masses of India, but they have also served variously as objects of worship, talismans and mementoes, or indeed as a combination of all three. Finally, the paper will also attempt to address issues such as the motivations and expectations of the practitioners of this tradition, as well as the influence of their social background in their choice of memorabilia.

Pedram KHOSRONEJAD (St Andrews University)

Pedram Khosronejad is an anthropologist and member of staff at the Department of Social Anthropology, University of St Andrews, Scotland. His field of expertise is visual piety, devotional artefacts and religious material culture in the Middle East more broadly, especially the understandings of memory, loss and death, and their relation to material landscapes and visual representations. His published writing includes 'Where is the anthropology of Iran after 70 years?' (*Anthropology News*, 2007); 'Anthropology of Islamic Shiite art and material culture' (*Anthropology News*, 2006). He is also the editor of the forthcoming books *The Art and Material Culture of Iranian Shi'ism: Iconography and Religious Devotion in Shi'i Islam* (Tauris 2011); *Women's Rituals and Ceremonies in Islamic World* (Centro Incontri Umani – Tauris); and *War in Iranian Cinema: Religion, Martyrdom and National Identity* (Tauris).

Curtains of heaven: celestial and devotional mural paintings of Iranian pilgrimage

In this talk the author will present and analyze the creation and function of mural paintings of saint shrines in Iran since the Safavide period (1501–1736). The main emphasis will be on the relationship between such devotional depictions and the veneration of saints in Shiite Iran. This talk will be completed by a case study of mural paintings of shrines of saints which are located in and around Lahijan in the north of Iran.

Saskia KERSENBOOM (Amsterdam University, The Netherlands)

Saskia Kersenboom is Associate Professor of Theatre Studies at Amsterdam University, The Netherlands. Her present research interests combine an intercultural approach to performance with one that is deeply rooted in Indian ritual traditions. She is Director of the Paramparai Foundation for the Performing Arts of South India and lives in Legend, Northern Hungary.

Lady of Great Bliss

In the hills of Northern Hungary pilgrims have for centuries travelled to sacred places where mother earth opens up miraculous stones, hills, rock-caves and, especially, healing water from divine wells. The focal point of their devotion are the female representations, whether they be in the ancient Maria, the newly founded temple for Buddhist Tara, or the nubile girls in UNESCO World Heritage Holloko village. All are to be found within the range of 20 km around the pilgrim site of Szentkut and its Holy Well. This presentation compares and analyses the performative strategies in the arts of storytelling, song and mimetic action that enable believers to turn their devotion into a sensuous, invigorating experience of the divine.

Alexandre PAPAS (CNRS - CETOBAC / EHESS, Paris)

Alexandre Papas, Research Fellow at the Centre National de la Recherche Scientifique (CNRS) in Paris, is a historian of Islamic Central Asia. His research focus on Islam and Sufism in Central Asia and the neighbouring regions (Western China and Northern India) from the sixteenth century to present. He has been a visiting professor at the Kyoto University, the Ohio State University, and the American University of Paris. He is the author of *Soufisme et politique entre Chine, Tibet et Turkestan* (Paris, Jean Maisonneuve, 2005), *Mystiques et vagabonds en islam* (Paris, Cerf, 2010), and *Voyage au Pays des Salars* (Paris, Cartouche, 2011). With Thomas Welsford and Thierry Zarcone, he is the editor of a collaborative volume entitled *Central Asian Pilgrims: Hajj Routes and Pious Visits between Central Asia and the Hijaz* (Berlin, Klaus Schwarz-IFEAC, 2011).

Steles, relics and photographs in the Muslim shrines of north-west China (Qinghai and Gansu)

In the provinces of Qinghai and Gansu (more precisely: Xunhua Salar Autonomous County and Jishishan Bonan, Dongxiang and Salar Autonomous County) live several Muslim minorities, namely Hui, Salar, Dongxiang, Bonan and Kargan Tibetan. Whether Chinese, Turkic, Mongolian or Tibetan speakers, they all venerate saints and perform pilgrimage on their shrines. Based on fieldwork conducted in 2010, this presentation introduces the main features of Islam and Sufism in the area. In a second step, I will focus on the specific shrines in which Qâdirî and Naqshbandî saints are buried, and where several material features appear repeatedly: 1) the granite steles composed in Chinese, which provide basic information to visitors; 2) the relics jealously preserved by the shrine custodians and shown at exceptional occasions; 3) the photographs taken by pilgrims and used as souvenirs of pious visits and mystical rituals. These three material aspects of Sufi holy places tend to multiply the narratives associated with pilgrimage, reconstructing the religious memory of Muslim minorities in north-west China.

Charles RAMBLE (Oriental Institute, University of Oxford)

Charles Ramble was born in India in 1957, and educated in England. After reading Psychology and Anthropology at the University of Durham he went on to pursue a D.Phil in Social Anthropology at the University of Oxford. Following two years of post-doctoral research in Nepal he remained in the country to work in wildlife conservation and local development, but returned to academic life to participate in German-funded, and later Austrian-funded, research projects on Tibetan societies. In 2000, after more than fifteen years in Nepal and Tibet, he took up the position of University Lecturer in Tibetan and Himalayan Studies that had recently been established at the University of Oxford, UK. In 2006 he was elected President of the International Association for Tibetan Studies. Since 2010 he has been Directeur d'études at the École Pratique des Hautes Études in Paris, and also holds the position of University Research Lecturer at the University of Oxford.

Objets trouvés: the transformation of nature into art in Tibetan pilgrimage

Pilgrimage is one of the most widespread and popular activities among Tibetan Buddhists and followers of the Bön religion. Although a few pilgrimages are centred on man-made shrines such as the 'cathedral' (Jokhang) of Lhasa, the majority entail arduous journeys to uninhabited mountain wildernesses. The trails and sacred sites at these locations are festooned with coloured flags printed with prayers, as well as white ceremonial scarves and sacred formulae sometimes carved into rocks, but the natural environment is otherwise hardly transformed; except, that is, in the imagination of the pilgrims. In the abundant 'guidebook' literature associated with each pilgrimage route, topographic features are sacralized by being re-envisioned as a wide range of ritual items, animals, divinities and even social interactions. While this 'denaturalised' landscape is sometimes transferred to painted scrolls, the true richness of the imagery is reserved for pilgrims who see these objects *in situ*, through the prism of prescribed religious vision.

Razia SULTANOVA (Central Asian Forum, University of Cambridge, UK)

Dr Razia Sultanova is a fellow at the Central Asian Forum (University of Cambridge). His area of expertise is music and society in Central Asia and the Middle East. Sultanova's higher education began in Uzbek State Conservatory in Tashkent, and further progressed in the Moscow State Conservatory where she was granted a Ph.D. in 1988. She is currently a Visiting Professor at the Moscow State Conservatory. Moving to the West in 1992, she lived in France and Germany before finally settling down in the UK. She teaches music at all levels, focusing on the role of music in society, music and identity, gender and music, and performance studies. She is the author of *From Shamanism to Sufism: Women, Islam and Culture in Central Asia* (London: Tauris, 2011) and has edited three volumes, including *Music and Identity in Contemporary Central Asia* (London, 2005). She is currently working on the new book on popular culture of Afghanistan, supported by a three-year grant from the British Council.

Devotional chanting in Uzbek and Kazakh pilgrimages (Shahimardan, Bukhara, Turkestan)

Pilgrimages in Central Asia accompanied by devotional chanting have not yet been the subject of sustained scholarly attention, but they occur on a regular basis and are significant

for the study of religions. Pilgrimage destinations in Central Asia are distinguished by various forms of performance, and the choice of chanting and narration relates to the different Sufi orders: Qadiriya in Shahimardan in Ferghana Valley, Naqshbandiya in Bukhara and Yasaviya in Turkestan. When, for example, you arrive in the mountainous region of Shahimardan in Ferghana Valley, you are surrounded by people singing and praying, performing suras from the Holy Quran as well as blessings and various Sufi ghazals. In Bukhara around the tomb of Naqshbandi, and in Turkestan in the region of the Khanaqa of Ahmad Yasavi, these chants build an essential part of devotional rituals. How are they performed? What is their origin? Who are their performers? These and other similar questions are examined in my paper.

Hümeyra ULUDAG (Istanbul University, Turkey)

Hümeyra Uludağ is a Ph.D. candidate in the History of Art Department at the University of Istanbul. She gained her MA degree in the same department, working on dervish lodge calligraphic panels in the Ottoman Sufi tradition. Her Ph.D. topic is 'Images of marginal Sufis in Eastern and Western visual sources'. Her aim is to study the different approaches of Eastern and Western artists with regard to non-conformist Sufis and to understand the reasons that lie behind these differences. She has published articles on Sufi symbolism, Sufi artefacts and paraphernalia (dervish headgear, banners) and Sufi calligraphy.

Shrines and the culture of pilgrimage in Ottoman visual materials

Shrines, which are the centres of popular pietism in Ottoman society, comprise one of the most significant dynamics of social life. These sacred locations, which substantially guide religious, social and psychological lives of people, are observed in Ottoman miniatures. This paper will concentrate on certain dimensions of the shrines that are reflected in the Ottoman visual materials, such as their architecture and setting, and the culture of pilgrimage and rituals. The way this topic is studied in visual terms and the modes of representation and the motifs in the miniatures will be also discussed.

Thierry ZARCONÉ (CNRS - GSRL / EPHE, Paris)

Thierry V. Zarcone is Senior Researcher (Directeur de Recherches) at the Centre National de la Recherche Scientifique in Paris (Groupe Sociétés Religions Laïcité). In addition to being a visiting professor in Kyoto (2005–6) and Fribourg (2007), he is an expert on Islamic studies and the history of systems of thought in the Turco-Iranian region. The author of numerous articles on related scholarly topics, including the history of Sufism and shamanism in the Ottoman Empire, Turkey, Central Asia, and Chinese Turkestan, he has published several works on modern and contemporary Turkish and Central Asian history. Thierry Zarcone's book *Mystiques, philosophes et francs-maçons en Islam* (Paris, Maisonneuve, 1993) was awarded the Prix Saintour of the Académie des Sciences Morales et Politiques. His most recent publications include *Secret et Sociétés secrètes en islam* (Milan, 2002), *La Turquie moderne et l'islam* (Paris, 2004), *La Turquie De l'Empire ottoman à la République d'Atatürk* (Paris, 2005) and *Sufi Pilgrims from Central Asia and India in Jerusalem* (Kyoto, 2009). Thierry Zarcone is also one of the editors (along with Arthur Buehler and Ekrem İşin) of the *Journal of the History of Sufism* (Paris).

Flag and banner rituals at shrines in Asian Islam (Central Asia, Xinjiang, India)

This presentation will examine the role played by banners or flags (*tugh/tughaläm*), major sacred artefacts in saint veneration and tomb cults in Turkic Islam. In particular it will consider the offering of banners, a notable ritual executed at the saints' tombs in Eastern Turkestan/Xinjiang (China) and, in a different manner, in India. My approach is both historical and anthropological. I will first show that the use of banners during pilgrimages at saint tombs in Central Asia has shamanic, Buddhist and Islamic origins. These three traditions have mingled over time and gave birth to a very syncretic practice. Also worthy of mention is the frequent identification, as shown in the written sources in Persian and Oriental Turkish, of the word '*mazar*', for the tombs of saints, with the word '*tughaläm*', a banner – a sign that the banner is a central element in the saint cult and gives him its legitimacy. One of the most compelling proofs of this, is that the Chinese administration of Xinjiang, when aiming to eradicate saint's cults and pilgrimage before and after 1049, forbade the banners at these places – a proscription that remains to this day. After this historical introduction, I will report on the rituals of the offering of banners that are performed nowadays at shrines in Xinjiang, along with the aesthetic and artistic dimensions of these artefacts..



Fondazione Centro Incontri Umani Ascona

The Cross Cultural Centre, Ascona - Centro Incontri Umani, Ascona - is a recognized Swiss Foundation. It was set up by Dr. Angela Hobart, London, in the memory of her parents, Dr. Edmund and Margiana Stinnes – von Gaevernitz. The aim of the Centre is to encourage understanding, respect and peace internationally, which is especially important in our contemporary era, beset by natural disasters and widespread human conflict. The Centre addresses issues of cross cultural concern in the domains of society, politics, philosophy, art, religion and medicine. By encouraging exchange among scholars, students, artists and laypeople of different countries and disciplines, the Centre seeks to honour the capacity of humans to revitalize consciousness and remake their lived realities.

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