

Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin
Institut für Asien- und Afrikawissenschaften
Zentralasien-Seminar

Tibet Kolloquium

Dr. Christoph Bergmann, Heidelberg University

Confluent Territories and Overlapping Sovereignties:
The Indo-Tibetan Border
in Nineteenth Century Kumaon



Bhotiya shepherd, Panchachuli East Face (©Bergmann 2008)

This talk looks at the ways in which the Indo-Tibetan border was established in nineteenth century Kumaon. This former Himalayan kingdom was annexed by the British in 1815, providing the East India Company with its first direct access route to the Tibetan Plateau. My empirical case study focuses on the Bhotiyas, trans-Himalayan traders who interacted closely with both British and Tibetan authorities. These interactions reveal that confluent territories and overlapping sovereignties are keys to understanding the emergence of this high mountain border. Overlapping sovereignties occur when different actors claim control over the same sort of thing, for instance trade. Whilst these claims are often imagined as being inherently territorial, their articulation can also, and at the same time, be marked by great uncertainty as to who controls where.

Dr. Christoph Bergmann is a lecturer in Geography at the South Asia Institute of Heidelberg University. He received his Ph.D. in Social Anthropology at the same university with a dissertation on trade relationships, ethnic identities and mobile livelihoods in the high mountain border triangle between India, Tibet and Nepal. Besides his extensive research experience in High Asia he has also conducted repeated fieldwork in Sub-Saharan Africa.

Mittwoch, 9. Januar 2019

18.00 Uhr

Invalidenstr. 118, Raum 507

(S-Bahn Nordbahnhof, U6 Naturkundemuseum)