Sherpas Through Their Rituals

Not Hollywood

Fire of Himal

Visions of Culture

Into Thin Air

Semiotica

This is a major anthropological study of contemporary Tibetan Buddhist monasticism and tantric ritual in the Ladakh region of North-West India and of the role of tantric ritual in the formation and maintenance of traditional forms of state structure and political consciousness in Tibet. Containing detailed descriptions and analyses of monastic ritual, the work builds up a picture of Tibetan tantric traditions as they interact with more localised understandings of bodily identity and territorial cosmology, to produce a substantial re-interpretation of the place of monks as ritual performers and peripheral householders in Ladakh. The work also examines the central and indispensable role of incarnate lamas, such as the Dalai Lama, in the religious life of Tibetan Buddhists.

Sources of Tibetan Tradition

"This book compiles and integrates highly innovative work aimed at bridging the fields of anthropology and consumer behavior." --Journal of Consumer Affairs

"... fascinating ... ambitious and interesting ... " --Canadian Advertising Foundation Newsletter "... an anthropological dig into consumerism brimming with original thought ... " --The Globe and Mail "Grant McCracken has written a provocative book that puts consumerism in its place in Western society--at the centre." --Report on Business Magazine "... a stimulating addition to knowledge and theory about the interrelationship of culture and consumption." --Choice "[McCracken's] synthesis of anthropological and consumer studies material will give historians new ideas and methods to integrate into their thinking." --Maryland Historian "The book offers a fresh and much needed cultural interpretation of consumption." --Journal of Consumer Policy

"The volume will help balance the prevailing cognitive and social psychological cast of consumer research and should stimulate more comprehensive investigation into consumer behavior." --Journal of Marketing Research "... broad scope, enthusiasm and imagination ... a significant contribution to the literature on consumption history, consumer behavior, and American material culture." --Winterthur Portfolio "For this is a superb book, a definitive
exploration of its subject that makes use of the full range of available literature." --American Journal of Sociology "McCracken’s book is a fine synthesis of a new current of thought that strives to create an interdisciplinary social science of consumption behaviors, a current to which folklorists have much to contribute." --Journal of American Folklore This provocative book takes a refreshing new view of the culture of consumption. McCracken examines the interplay of culture and consumer behavior from the anthropologist’s point of view and provides new insights into the way we view ourselves and our society.

The Effects of Hypoxia and Nutrition on Premenopausal Sherpa Women Living at High and Low Altitude in Nepal

This book presents a model for analyzing and evaluating ethnographic arguments. It examines the relationship between the claims anthropologists make about human behavior and the data they use to warrant them. Jacobson analyzes the textual organization of ethnographies, focusing on the ways in which problems, interpretations, and data are put together. He examines in detail a limited number of well-known ethnographic cases, which are selected to illustrate basic theoretical frameworks and modes of analysis. By advancing a method for assessing ethnographic accounts, the book contributes to the current debate on the role of rhetoric and reflexivity in anthropology.

Sherpas

A comprehensive guide to the history, beliefs, concepts, practices, and major figures of religions past and present.

Identity, Ritual and State in Tibetan Buddhism

The award-winning anthropologist Sherry B. Ortner draws on her longstanding interest in theories of cultural practice to rethink key concepts of culture, agency, and subjectivity.

Anthropology and Social Theory

Culture and Consumption

Journal of the Anthropological Society of Oxford

An eminent anthropologist examines the foundings of the first celibate Buddhist monasteries among the Sherpas of Nepal in the early twentieth century—a religious development that was a major departure from “folk” or “popular” Buddhism. Sherry Ortner is the first to integrate social scientific and historical modes of analysis in a study of the Sherpa monasteries and one of the very few to attempt such an account for Buddhist monasteries anywhere. Combining ethnographic and oral-historical methods, she scrutinizes the interplay of political and cultural factors in the events culminating in the foundings. Her work constitutes a major advance both in our knowledge of Sherpa Buddhism and in the integration of anthropological and historical modes of analysis. At the theoretical level, the book contributes to an emerging theory of “practice,” an explanation of the relationship between human intentions and actions on the one hand, and the structures of society and culture that emerge from and feed back upon those intentions and actions on the other. It will appeal not only to the increasing number of anthropologists working on similar problems but also to historians anxious to discover what anthropology has to offer to historical analysis. In addition, it will be essential reading for those interested in Nepal, Tibet, the Sherpa, or Buddhism in general.

Contributions to Nepalese studies

Ritual is one of the most pervasive religious phenomena in the Tibetan cultural world. Despite its ubiquity and importance to Tibetan cultural life, however, only in recent years has Tibetan ritual been given the attention it deserves. This is the first scholarly collection to focus on this important subject. Unique in its historical, geographical and disciplinary breadth, this book brings together eleven essays by an international cast of scholars working on ritual texts, institutions and practices in the greater Tibetan cultural world — Tibet, Nepal, Bhutan, and Mongolia. While most of the chapters focus on Buddhism, two deal with ritual in Tibet’s indigenous Bon religion. All of the essays are original to this volume. An extensive introduction by the editor provides a broad overview of Tibetan ritual and contextualizes the chapters within the field of Buddhist and Tibetan studies. The book should find use in advanced undergraduate courses and graduate seminars on Tibetan religion. It will also be of interest to students and scholars of ritual generally.
Access Free Sherpas Through Their Rituals

Nepal

From handshakes and toasts to chant and genuflection, ritual pervades our social interactions and religious practices. Still, few of us could identify all of our daily and festal ritual behaviors, much less explain them to an outsider. Similarly, because of the variety of activities that qualify as ritual and their many contradictory yet, in many ways, equally legitimate interpretations, ritual seems to elude any systematic historical and comparative scrutiny. In this book, Catherine Bell offers a practical introduction to ritual practice and its study; she surveys the most influential theories of religion and ritual, the major categories of ritual activity, and the key debates that have shaped our understanding of ritualism. Bell refuses to nail down ritual with any one definition or understanding. Instead, her purpose is to reveal how definitions emerge and evolve and to help us become more familiar with the interplay of tradition, exigency, and self-expression that goes into constructing this complex social medium.

The Encyclopedia of Religion

Ritual studies today figures as a central element of religious discourse for many scholars around the world. Ritual Theory, Ritual Practice, Catherine Bell’s sweeping and seminal work on the subject, helped legitimize the field. In this volume, Bell re-examines the issues, methods, and ramifications of our interest in ritual by concentrating on anthropology, sociology, and the history of religions. Now with a new foreword by Diane Jonte-Pace, Bell’s work is a must-read for understanding the evolution of the field of ritual studies and its current state.

Sherpas Through Their Rituals

A major reconsideration of culture and gender by a founder of feminist anthropology. “[An] engaging book. . . . A fine example of the way anthropology helps us to think about ourselves.” —Tanya Luhrmann, The New York Times “To have [Ortner’s] brilliant writings gathered together in one volume, along with an introduction that is sure to move even further our understanding of gender, is a gift to all of us.” —Nancy J. Chodorow, author of The Reproduction of Mothering

Making Gender

Knowledge and Passion

The pioneering anthropologist Sherry B. Ortner explores the culture and practices of independent filmmaking in the U.S., arguing that during the past three decades, independent cinema has provided vital cultural critique.

High Religion

This book is an easy-to-read resource focusing on the interrelationship of religious traditions and particular cultural contexts, including the political economy. It demonstrates the connection between social structure, class, caste, gender, ethnicity, and religion. Basic issues that provide insight into the anthropological perspective on religion are discussed, leading into the topics of mythology and folklore, ritual, shamanism, sorcery and witchcraft, aboriginal religions, African religions, classical Old and New World religions, Judaism, Catholicism, Protestantism, Islam, and New Age religious trends. For anyone interested in an introduction to the religions of the world, and a glimpse into the future development of religion in the twenty-first century.

The Sherpas Transformed

National Bestseller A bank of clouds was assembling on the not-so-distant horizon, but journalist-mountaineer Jon Krakauer, standing on the summit of Mt. Everest, saw nothing that “suggested that a murderous storm was bearing down.” He was wrong. The storm, which claimed five lives and left countless more—including Krakauer’s—in guilt-ridden disarray, would also provide the impetus for Into Thin Air, Krakauer’s epic account of the May 1996 disaster. By writing Into Thin Air, Krakauer may have hoped to exorcise some of his own demons and lay to rest some of the painful questions that still surround the event. He takes great pains to provide a balanced picture of the people and events he witnessed and gives due credit to the tireless and dedicated Sherpas. He also avoids blasting easy targets such as Sandy Pittman, the wealthy socialite who brought an espresso maker along on the expedition. Krakauer’s highly personal inquiry into the catastrophe provides a great deal of insight into what went wrong. But for Krakauer himself, further interviews and investigations
only lead him to the conclusion that his perceived failures were directly responsible for a fellow climber’s death. Clearly, Krakauer remains haunted by the disaster, and although he relates a number of incidents in which he acted selflessly and even heroically, he seems unable to view those instances objectively. In the end, despite his evenhanded and even generous assessment of others’ actions, he reserves a full measure of vitriol for himself. This updated edition of Into Thin Air includes an extensive new postscript that sheds fascinating light on the acrimonious debate that flared between Krakauer and Everest guide Anatoli Boukreev in the wake of the tragedy. “I have no doubt that Boukreev’s intentions were good on summit day,” writes Krakauer in the postscript, dated August 1999. “What disturbs me, though, was Boukreev’s refusal to acknowledge the possibility that he made even a single poor decision. Never did he indicate that perhaps it wasn’t the best choice to climb without gas or go down ahead of his clients.” As usual, Krakauer supports his points with dogged research and a good dose of humility. But rather than continue the heated discourse that has raged since Into Thin Air’s denouncement of guide Boukreev, Krakauer’s tone is conciliatory; he points most of his criticism at G. Weston De Walt, who coauthored The Climb, Boukreev’s version of events. And in a touching conclusion, Krakauer recounts his last conversation with the late Boukreev, in which the two weathered climbers agreed to disagree about certain points. Krakauer had great hopes to patch things up with Boukreev, but the Russian later died in an avalanche on another Himalayan peak, Annapurna I. In 1999, Krakauer received an Academy Award in Literature from the American Academy of Arts and Letters—a prestigious prize intended “to honor writers of exceptional accomplishment.” According to the Academy’s citation, “Krakauer combines the tenacity and courage of the finest tradition of investigative journalism with the stylish subtlety and profound insight of the born writer. His account of an ascent of Mount Everest has led to a general reevaluation of climbing and of the commercialization of what was once a romantic, solitary sport; while his account of the life and death of Christopher McCandless, who died of starvation after challenging the Alaskan wilderness, delves even more deeply and disturbingly into the fascination of nature and the devastating effects of its lure on a young and curious mind.”

**Indonesian Religions in Transition**

The Sherpas were dead, two more victims of an attempt to scale Mt. Everest. Members of a French climbing expedition, sensitive perhaps about leaving the bodies where they could not be recovered, rolled them off a steep mountain face. One body, however, crashed to a stop near Sherpas on a separate expedition far below. They stared at the frozen corpse, stunned. They said nothing, but an American climber observing the scene interpreted their thoughts: Nobody would throw the body of a white climber off Mt. Everest. For more than a century, climbers from around the world have journ-eyed to test themselves on Everest’s treacherous slopes, enlisting the expert aid of the Sherpas who live in the area. Drawing on years of field research in the Himalayas, renowned anthropologist Sherry Ortner presents a compelling account of the evolving relationship between the mountaineers and the Sherpas, a relationship of mutual dependence and cultural conflict played out in an environment of mortal risk. Ortner explores this relationship partly through gripping accounts of expeditions—often in the climbers’ own words—ranging from nineteenth-century forays by the British through the historic ascent of Hillary and Tenzing to the disasters described in Jon Krakauer’s Into Thin Air. She reveals the climbers, or “sahibs,” to use the Sherpas’ phrase, as countercultural romantics, seeking to transcend the vulgarity and materialism of modernity through the rigor and beauty of mountaineering. She shows how climbers’ behavior toward the Sherpas has ranged from kindness to cruelty, from cultural sensitivity to derision. Ortner traces the political and economic factors that led the Sherpas to join expeditions and examines the impact of climbing on their traditional culture, religion, and identity. She examines Sherpas’ attitude toward death, the implications of the shared masculinity of Sherpas and sahibs, and the relationship between Sherpas and the increasing number of women climbers. Ortner also tackles debates about whether the Sherpas have been “spoiled” by mountaineering and whether climbing itself has been spoiled by commercialism.

**The Journal of Asian Studies**

Since the birth of modern mountaineering, the term Sherpa has been used to refer to Himalayan men working as guides on expeditions in and around the area of Mount Everest. Known mostly for their remarkable mountaineering skills and expertise, Sherpas are much more than mere high-altitude porters. The Sherpas are an extraordinary ethnic people who settled the remote valleys in the Himalayas about 500 years ago and whose culture is steeped in the rich philosophical traditions of Himalayan Buddhism. As distinguished British Himalayan mountaineer Eric Shipton wrote: “. . . the temperament and character of the Sherpas . . . have won them a large place in the hearts of the Western travellers. Their most enduring characteristic is their extraordinary gaiety of spirit.” For three decades, writer and naturalist Frances Klatzel has lived and worked with Sherpas near Mount Everest. During this time, she has gained intimate access and a profound knowledge of the people, helping to create the Sherpa Cultural Centre at Tengboche, the largest Buddhist monastery in the region. Infused with the author’s own reflections and experiences, and complete with colour photos highlighting Sherpa life from the metaphysical to the everyday, Gaiety of Spirit will take the reader on a magnificent journey toward a richer level of understanding of Sherpa culture, traditions, symbols, belief and history.

**Love and Honor in the Himalayas**
Religion and Culture

Marshall Sahlins centers these essays on islands—Hawaii, Fiji, New Zealand—whose histories have intersected with European history. But he is also concerned with the insular thinking in Western scholarship that creates false dichotomies between past and present, between structure and event, between the individual and society. Sahlins's provocative reflections form a powerful critique of Western history and anthropology.

Tantra and Popular Religion in Tibet

Ritual Theory, Ritual Practice

The most comprehensive collection of Tibetan works in a Western language, this volume illuminates the complex historical, intellectual, and social development of Tibetan civilization from its earliest beginnings to the modern period. Including more than 180 representative writings, Sources of Tibetan Tradition spans Tibet's vast geography and long history, presenting for the first time a diversity of works by religious and political leaders; scholastic philosophers and contemplative hermits; monks and nuns; poets and artists; and aristocrats and commoners. The selected readings reflect the profound role of Buddhist sources in shaping Tibetan culture while illustrating other major areas of knowledge. Thematically varied, they address history and historiography; political and social theory; law; medicine; divination; rhetoric; aesthetic theory; narrative; travel and geography; folksong; and philosophical and religious learning, all in relation to the unique trajectories of Tibetan civil and scholarly discourse. The editors begin each chapter with a survey of broader social and cultural contexts and introduce each translated text with a concise explanation. Concluding with writings that extend into the early twentieth century, this volume offers an expansive encounter with Tibet's exceptional intellectual heritage.

New Jersey Dreaming

Michelle Rosaldo presents an ethnographic interpretation of the life of the Ilongots, a group of some 3,500 hunters and horticulturists in Northern Luzon, Philippines. Her study focuces on headhunting, a practice that remained active among the Ilongots until at least 1972. Indigenous notions of 'knowledge' and 'passion' are crucial to the Ilongots' perceptions of their own social practices of headhunting, oratory, marriage, and the organization of subsistence labour. In explaining the significance of these key ideas, Professor Rosaldo examines what she considers to be the most important dimensions of Ilongot social relationships: the contrasts between men and women and between accomplished married men and bachelor youths. By defining 'knowledge' and 'passion' in the context of their social and affective significance, the author demonstrates the place of headhunting in historical and political processes, and shows the relation between headhunting and indigenous concepts of curing, reproduction, and health. Theoretically oriented toward interpretive of symbolic ethnography, this book clarifies some of the ways in which the study of a language - both vocabulary and patterns of usage - is a study of a culture; the process of translation is presented as a method of cultural interpretation. Professor Rosaldo argues that an appreciation of the Ilongots' specific notions of 'the self' and the emotional concepts associated with headhunting can illuminate central aspects of the group's social life.

Tibetan Ritual

Explorers Journal

Ritual

James Fisher combines the strengths of technical anthropology, literary memoir, and striking photography in this telling study of rapid social change in Himalayan Nepal. The author first visited the Sherpas of Nepal when he accompanied Sir Edmund Hilary on the Himalayan Schoolhouse Expedition of 1964. Returning to the Everest region several times during the 1970s and 1980s, he discovered that the construction of the schools had far less impact than one of the by-products of their building: a short-take-off-and-landing airstrip. By reducing the time it took to travel between Kathmandu and the Everest region from a hike of several days to a 45-minute flight, the airstrip made a rapid increase in tourism possible. Beginning with his impressions of Sherpa society in pre-tourist days, Fisher traces the trajectory of contemporary Sherpa society reeling under the impact of modern education and mass tourism, and assesses the Sherpa's concerns for their future and how they believe these problems should be and eventually will be resolved.
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**Reading Ethnography**

Famed anthropologist Ortner tracks down representative classmates from her mostly Jewish Newark, NJ high school class of ’58 in order to examine class culture and ethnicity in America today.

**Life and Death on Mt. Everest**

This new edition of Jerry D. Moore's *Visions of Culture* presents introductory anthropology students with a brief, readable, and balanced treatment of theoretical developments in the field. New to this edition are pieces on Sherry Ortner, Pierre Bourdieu, and Eric Wolf, an Epilogue that describes key current debates over theory. This is an ideal text for classes on the theory or the history of anthropology.

**Occasional Papers in Sociology and Anthropology**

In a story of Everest unlike any told before, Jamling Tenzing Norgay gives us an insider's view of the Sherpa world. As Climbing Leader of the famed 1996 Everest IMAX expedition led by David Breashears, Jamling Norgay was able to follow in the footsteps of his legendary mountaineer father, Tenzing Norgay, who with Sir Edmund Hillary was the first to reach the summit of Mount Everest, in 1953. Jamling Norgay interweaves the story of his own ascent during the infamous May 1996 Mount Everest disaster with little-known stories from his father's historic climb and the spiritual life of the Sherpas, revealing a fascinating and profound world that few -- even many who have made it to the top -- have ever seen.

**Touching My Father's Soul**

Papers presented at a session of a conference held at the University of Newcastle, New South Wales, Australia, in August 1988.

**Culture/Power/History**

The intellectual radicalism of the 1960s spawned a new set of questions about the role and nature of "the political" in social life, questions that have since revolutionized nearly every field of thought, from literary criticism through anthropology to the philosophy of science. Michel Foucault in particular made us aware that whatever our functionally defined "roles" in society, we are constantly negotiating questions of authority and the control of the definitions of reality. Such insights have led theorists to challenge concepts that have long formed the very underpinnings of their disciplines. By exploring some of the most debated of these concepts—"culture," "power," and "history"—this reader offers an enriching perspective on social theory in the contemporary moment. Organized around these three concepts, *Culture/Power/History* brings together both classic and new essays that address Foucault's "new economy of power relations" in a number of different, contestatory directions. Representing innovative work from various disciplines and sites of study, from taxidermy to Madonna, the book seeks to affirm the creative possibilities available in a time marked by growing uncertainty about established disciplinary forms of knowledge and by the increasing fluidity of the boundaries between them. The book is introduced by a major synthetic essay by the editors, which calls attention to the most significant issues enlivening theoretical discourse today. The editors seek not only to encourage scholars to reflect anew on the course of social theory, but also to orient newcomers to this area of inquiry. The essays are contributed by Linda Alcoff ("Cultural Feminism versus Post-Structuralism"), Sally Alexander ("Women, Class, and Sexual Differences in the 1830s and 1840s"), Tony Bennett ("The Exhibitionary Complex"), Pierre Bourdieu ("Structures, Habitus, Power"), Nicholas B. Dirks ("Ritual and Resistance"), Geoff Eley ("Nations, Publics, and Political Cultures"), Michel Foucault (Two Lectures), Henry Louis Gates, Jr. ("Authority, [White] Power and the [Black] Critic"), Stephen Greenblatt ("The Circulation of Social Energy"), Ranajit Guha ("The Prose of Counter-Insurgency"), Stuart Hall ("Cultural Studies: Two Paradigms"), Susan Harding ("The Born-Again Telescandals"), Donna Haraway ("Teddy Bear Patriarchy"), Dick Hebdige ("After the Masses"), Susan McClary ("Living to Tell: Madonna's Resurrection of the Fleshly"), Sherry B. Ortner ("Theory in Anthropology since the Sixties"), Marshall Sahlins ("Cosmologies of Capitalism"), Elizabeth G. Traube ("Secrets of Success in Postmodern Society"), Raymond Williams (selections from Marxism and Literature), and Judith Williamson ("Family, Education, Photography").

**The New York Times Book Review**

Professor Ortner examines the Sherpas of the Himalayas.

**Ladakh**
American anthropologist Ernestine McHugh arrived in the foothills of the Annapurna mountains in Nepal, and, surrounded by terraced fields, rushing streams, and rocky paths, she began one of several sojourns among the Gurung people whose ramro hawa-pani (good wind and water) not only describes the enduring bounty of their land but also reflects the climate of goodwill they seek to sustain in their community. It was in their steep Himalayan villages that McHugh came to know another culture, witnessing and learning the Buddhist appreciation for equanimity in moments of precious joy and inevitable sorrow. Love and Honor in the Himalayas is McHugh’s gripping ethnographic memoir based on research among the Gurungs conducted over a span of fourteen years. As she chronicles the events of her fieldwork, she also tells a story that admits feeling and involvement, writing of the people who housed her in the terms in which they cast their relationship with her, that of family. Welcomed to call her host Ama and become a daughter in the household, McHugh engaged in a strong network of kin and friendship. She intimately describes, with a sure sense of comedy and pathos, the family’s diverse experiences of life and loss, self and personhood, hope, knowledge, and affection. In mundane as well as dramatic rituals, the Gurungs ever emphasize the importance of love and honor in everyday life, regardless of circumstances, in all human relationships. Such was the lesson learned by McHugh, who arrived a young woman facing her own hardships and came to understand—and experience—the power of their ways of being. While it attends to a particular place and its inhabitants, Love and Honor in the Himalayas is, above all, about human possibility, about what people make of their lives. Through the compelling force of her narrative, McHugh lets her emotionally open fieldwork reveal insight into the privilege of joining a community and a culture. It is an invitation to sustain grace and kindness in the face of adversity, cultivate harmony and mutual support, and cherish life fully.