

Foreword

The first two international conferences of SEECHAC (Society for the Study of the Cultures of the Himalayas and Central Asia), at that time run by Prof. Gérard Fussman (chair "History of the Indian World", Collège de France, Paris), were held in Paris in 2009, then in Rome in 2011. The third conference, organised by Dr. Christian Jahoda together with Prof. Jorinde Ebert (Department of Art History, University of Vienna), Dr. Christiane Kalantari, Dr. Maria-Katharina Lang and Univ.-Doz. Dr. Guntram Hazod (all Institute for Social Anthropology, Austrian Academy of Sciences / AAS, Vienna), was held from 25 to 27 November 2013 in the inspiring historical precincts of the main building of the Austrian Academy of Sciences in Vienna, under the title *Interaction in the Himalayas and Central Asia: Processes of Transfer, Translation and Transformation in Art, Archaeology, Religion and Polity from Antiquity to the Present Day*.

The conference was introduced by Prof. Brigitte Mazohl (President of the philosophical-historical section of the AAS), Prof. Frantz Grenet (President of SEECHAC) and Prof. Ernst Steinkellner (AAS).

Twenty-four papers were presented to a numerous and responsive audience, including a number of students. Speakers came from Austria, Germany, France, England, Italy, Hungary, the USA, Mongolia and India. Unfortunately, two Tibetan colleagues, Prof. Pasang Wangdu and Prof. Tsering Gyalpo from the Tibetan Academy of Social Sciences in Lhasa, who had been invited, were unable to come for administrative reasons. In accordance with the title of the conference, the papers touched on a broad spectrum of periods and countries, but with a general emphasis on questions of transfers and adaptations from one culture to the next, and sometimes between geographically very distant cultures. The introduction to this volume

by Christian Jahoda provides a detailed survey of the topics which were addressed at that time and which are discussed in the articles that comprise this volume.

Our hosts in Vienna were warmly congratulated for the perfect organisation and the cheerful atmosphere. Now the volume is ready we can appreciate the excellent work of the editors and publishers, in addition also the advice and consultation provided by Christiane Kalantari and Eva Kössner. Special thanks are due to the Austrian Science Fund (FWF): P21806-G19, the Institute for Social Anthropology, Austrian Academy of Sciences, Vienna, and the Simone et Cino Del Duca Foundation, managed by the French Académie des Inscriptions et Belles-lettres, for their generous financial contributions.

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SPELLING AND TRANSLITERATION SYSTEMS

For the purpose of easier readability for a readership that goes beyond the narrower philological discipline—and in accordance with the editorial style of notable international journals—for words and names from Arabic, Chinese, Mongolian, Nepali, Persian, Tibetan, Russian and Sanskrit, no academic transliteration has been used for spellings that are already “naturalised”, usually without diacritics, in the English-speaking world (and are therefore often also not italicised, e.g. mandala rather than *maṇḍala*, etc.).

Likewise in Tibetan, for better readability Anglicised spellings or spellings oriented on pronunciation are used (as is also customary for the *International Association for Tibetan Studies* or the *Journal of the International Association of Tibetan Studies*), although as a rule on the first mention in each article the spelling corresponding to the academic transliteration according to the Wylie system is given in brackets, often also with the Sanskrit equivalents.

Apart from this, names or words from Sanskrit are given in academic transliteration throughout as well as those from Arabic, Nepali and Persian. Those from Chinese are predominantly given in Pinyin, sometimes additionally with Chinese characters (e.g. to ensure unambiguous rendition of names of authors and work titles in bibliographies), and in the case of the Mongolian languages according to the at least largely customary respective transliteration systems. Owing to their documentary importance, in a few articles individual words or short passages of text are reproduced in Tibetan, Chinese and Mongolian-Cyrillic script or in German, Italian and French.