

ISA INTERNATIONAL GUEST LECTURE

HUMAN – NONHUMAN RELATIONS IN TIBETAN EXTENDED SOCIALITY: CONNECTEDNESS THROUGH SEPARATION

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This paper discusses how human relations with animals, demons, deities, and other corporeal or non-corporeal beings and forces, are shaped in Central Tibet. In a world perceived as a state of continuity, the shifting shape of this continuity-based extended sociality is predicated by the ontological principle that efficacious action, fertility, growth and health require separations that help contain the flow of vital forces. Inspired by Howell's analyses of 'the principle of separation' (1989), the paper illuminates first, how ritual practices in and around houses are based on ontological principles of connection and separation, and are crucial in the enactment and mediation of these relations. Second, it shows how these principles inform understandings of illness based in human - nonhuman relationality. Exploring endurance and elasticity of cosmological elements, the paper shows that ritual practices create boundaries between the realms of humans and nonhumans, which are constitutive of Tibetan ontologically inclusive sociality.



Heidi Fjeld's recent publications include: "Ontological separation in the state of continuity: Exploring Tibetan and Mongolian domestic space" in *From Bhakti to Bön: Festschrift for Per Kvaerne* (with Benedikte V. Lindskog, 2015), and "Women and Gender in Tibetan Medicine" in *Asian Medicine: Tradition and Modernity 6* (with Theresia Hofer, 2016).