CONCEPT
Kalimpong played a vital role as a center of convergence for the complex transcultural processes that affected the entire Eastern Himalayan region in the twentieth century. Originally an important link in the tea trade route connecting the Himalayas, it became the main transit hub for the exchange of Tibetan and European commodities in the wake of the British Younghusband invasion to Tibet in 1904. Economic development was accompanied by a growth of its population. The historical presence of various local ethnic groups met with an influx of traders and the settlement of British and Indian colonial officers, Christian missionaries, Nepali laborers, Tibetan dignitaries, Western Tibetologists, spiritual seekers, scholars and adventurers. While pursuing their respective goals, they formed complex networks and shaped and exchanged knowledge between worlds that had known very little about each other. Kalimpong thus became a salient space for complex cultural interactions. The study of such spaces in the colonial world has in recent years been enriched by new theoretical perspectives related to transcultural and postcolonial studies. With this conference, we focus on Kalimpong as a rich case study for stimulating dialogue between these different efforts, probing into various interconnected key areas, such as trade, religion, politics, media, scholarship, education, etc., using different methodological and disciplinary approaches.

VENUE
Himalayan Hotel, Kalimpong

ADMISSION
The conference is open to the public, attendance is free.

ORGANIZER
Dr. Markus Viehbeck
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Friday, March 6

09:15 KEYNOTE LECTURE
Markus Viehbeck: Welcome and Introduction
Tanka B. Subba: Processes of Cultural Identity Negotiations in the Himalayan Region
Chair: Jayeeta Sharma

10:45 Coffee and Tea Break

11:15 SESSION 01
Clare Harris: Photography in the ‘Contact Zones’ of the Himalayas
Anna Sawerthal: A Newspaper for Tibet: The Self through the Form of the Other
Chair: Amy Holmes-Tagchungdarpa

12:30 Lunch Break

14:00 SESSION 02
Amy Holmes-Tagchungdarpa: Recovering the New Himalayan Woman: Gender, Mobility and Alternative Modernities in the Construction of Kalimpong as a Contact Zone
Jayeeta Sharma: Circulation, Intimacies, and Writing ‘Connected’ Himalayan Histories
Chair: Davide Torri

15:45 Coffee and Tea Break

16:15 SESSION 03
Ilsrun Engelhardt: A Dedicated Initiator of Cultural Exchange: Tharchin’s Innovative Communication of Knowledge between the Tibetan and Western Worlds
Trine Brox & Miriam Kokvedgaard Zeitzen: The Third Danish Expedition to Central Asia – 7 Years in Kalimpong
Chair: Clare Harris

Saturday, March 7

09:30 SESSION 04
Kalzang Dorjee Bhutia: Beyond the Native Informant: Kalimpong and Darjeeling in the Making of Modern Sikkimese Intellectual Cultures
Markus Viehbeck: Scholarly Networks in Kalimpong and beyond: Knowledge Production and Powers of Representation
Chair: Carole McGranahan

10:45 Coffee and Tea Break

11:15 SESSION 05
Vibha Arora: The Rise of the Lepcha Subaltern and the Kalimpong Stimulus
Charisma Lepcha: Scottish Mission in Kalimpong and the Changing Dynamics of Lepcha Society
David Reid Syiemlieh: The Graham’s Homes and Missionary Activities in the Eastern Himalayas: Reflections from an Alumni and a Historian
Chair: Jayeeta Sharma

13:00 Lunch Break

14:00 GRADUATE STUDENT ROUNDTABLE
Kishan Harijan: The Role of Trade and Commerce in the Socio-Economic Conditions of the Darjeeling Hills (1861-1962)
Mingma Lhamu Pakhrin: The Politics of Mobilization of the Gorkhas: The Role of the Nepalese King (1914-1918)
Garima Rai: Interrogating Migrant Subjectivity in Indian Nepali Writings from Darjeeling Hills (1950-1980)
Shraddhanjali Tamang: Indigenous History and the Tamab Tradition
Binayak Sundas: Understanding the History of the Gorkhas/Gurkhas as a Socio-Political Process, 14th-20th Centuries
Reep Pandi Lepcha: Myths and Folktales of Lepchas: A Critical Assessment
Chair: Anna Sawerthal

16:00 Coffee and Tea Break

16:30 SESSION 06
Mona Chettri: Cultural Revivalism and Contact Zones in the Eastern Himalayas
Rajendra P. Dhakal: Changing Orientations: A Study of the Hill Communities
Chair: Kalzang Dorjee Bhutia