



Smithsonian

National Museum of Natural History

Guide to the Richard Kenneth
Saker films of Tibet, 1942-1943

Human Studies Film Archives
Museum Support Center
4210 Silver Hill Road
Suitland 20746
Business Number: Phone: 301-238-1330
Fax Number: Fax: 301-238-2883
hsfa@si.edu
<http://www.anthropology.si.edu/naa>

Table of Contents

Collection Overview	
Administrative Information	1
Biographical / Historical	1
Scope and Contents	2
Names and Subjects	
Container Listing	

Collection Overview

Repository:	Human Studies Film Archives
Title:	Richard Kenneth Saker films of Tibet
Date:	1942-1943
Identifier:	HSFA.2008.16
Creator:	Saker, Richard Kenneth, 1908-1979
Extent:	2 Film reels (44 minutes; color silent; 500 feet; 8mm) 261 Negatives (photographic) (black-and-white) 395 Photographic prints (black-and-white and hand-colored)
Language:	Moving image materials are silent; supplementary materials are in English.
Digital Content:	Image(s): Richard Kenneth Saker Film Collection, 1942-1943, OP.197-000002 Image(s): Richard Kenneth Saker Film Collection, 1942-1943, OP.161-000002

Administrative Information

Acquisition Information

Received from Stephen Saker in 2008.

Provenance

Previously titled "Richard Kenneth Saker Film Collection, 1942-1943."

Preferred Citation

Richard Kenneth Saker films of Tibet, Human Studies Film Archives, Smithsonian Institution

Restrictions

The collection is open for research. Please contact the archives for information on availability of access copies of audiovisual recordings. Original audiovisual material in the Human Studies Film Archives may not be played.

Conditions Governing Use

Contact the repository for terms of use.

Biographical / Historical

Richard Kenneth Saker was the British Trade Agent posted to Gyantse, Tibet from 1941-1943.

Scope and Contents

Collection consists of film and photographs taken by Richard Kenneth Saker of Tibetan New Year (Losar) and of Western Tibet 1942-1943. Collection also includes chapters from his unpublished memoir relating to his tour of duty in Tibet.

Please note that the contents of the collection and the language and terminology used reflect the context and culture of the time of its creation. As an historical document, its contents may be at odds with contemporary views and terminology and considered offensive today. The information within this collection does not reflect the views of the Smithsonian Institution or Anthropology Archives, but is available in its original form to facilitate research.

Names and Subject Terms

This collection is indexed in the online catalog of the Smithsonian Institution under the following terms:

Subjects:

- Buddhists
- New Year
- Nomads
- Tibetans

Cultures:

- Buddhists
- Tibetans

Types of Materials:

- silent films

Places:

- East Asia
- Tibet Region

Container Listing

Footage of Tibet, 1942-1943

2 Film reels (44 minutes; color silent; 500 feet; 8mm)

[Video: Richard Kenneth Saker Footage of Tibet, 1942-1943](#)

Notes: Footage shot by Richard Kenneth Saker, British Trade Agent located in Gyantse, Tibet, 1941-1943. Saker films women, children, and men in traditional dress including brightly decorated cloth, headgear, and jewelry. Filmed from above is possibly the New Year celebration (Losar) in Lhasa with dance (men twirling in circles, masked elaborately dressed dancers and lay women), monks in red and saffron robes with yellow headgear, and processions. In an unknown location horses, people and goods are unloaded from a barge and loaded with the same for crossing a body of water. Military-looking men on horses are filmed trekking through snow covered mountain. Also filmed is a market with boys sporting boxing gloves slugging each other and possibly Chinese officials and Dalai Lama's palace. In 1943 Saker filmed a trek through Western Tibet. This footage includes nomadic groups and Indian traders (a group of adults and children dancing; a boy and man both "whirling dervishes;" men and women dancing; woman playing drum; various encampments; and sheep shearing); warm spring with mineral calcification; herd of wild horses; eroded structure and land mass; vast desert areas devoid of vegetation; crossing by precarious bridges on horse and foot rivers and streams; a town; the sacred lake of Manosawar and a three-day pilgrimage around the sacred mountain of Kailas. Footage ends with fishing in northern India.

HSFA 2008.16.1

[Photographs of Tibet, 1942-1943](#)

291 Negatives (photographic) (black-and-white)

395 Photographic prints (black-and-white hand-colored)

Notes: Contains photographs of Gyantse and New Year festivities (Losar) in Lhasa, Tibet. Chaam dancers are also photographed in courtyard. Other images include a 1943 trek into Western Tibet including scenery and peoples encountered such as nomadic groups and Indian traders as well as some miscellaneous photographs of Saker and his wife.