



Smithsonian
National Museum of Natural History

Guide to the Sherry B. Ortner
photographs relating to Sherpa research

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December 2019

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Collection Overview

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|--------------------|---|
| Repository: | National Anthropological Archives |
| Title: | Sherry B. Ortner photographs relating to Sherpa research |
| Identifier: | NAA.PhotoLot.2019-19 |
| Date: | 1966-1990 |
| Extent: | 3 Linear feet 1,036 Slides (35mm) 88 Photographic prints (and associated negatives) |
| Creator: | Ortner, Sherry B., 1941- |
| Language: | English |

Administrative Information

Acquisition Information

The photographs were donated by Sherry B. Ortner in 2018.

Processing Information

Sherry Ortner's organization of the photographs has been maintained.

The collection was processed and finding aid encoded by Gina Rappaport.

Preferred Citation

Sherry B. Ortner photographs relating to Sherpa research, National Anthropological Archives, Smithsonian Institution.

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Restrictions

The Sherry B. Ortner photographs relating to Sherpa research collection is open for research.

Access to the collection requires an appointment.

Conditions Governing Use

Contact the repository for terms of use.

Biographical / Historical

Sherry B. Ortner (b. 1941) is a cultural anthropologist and Distinguished Professor of Anthropology at UCLA. She received her PhD from the University of Chicago in 1970 after carrying out extensive fieldwork among the Sherpas of Nepal from 1966-1968, looking at religion, politics, and Himalayan mountaineering. She continued research among the Sherpas in 1976, 1979, and 1990, publishing several important works including *Life and Death on Mt. Everest: Sherpas and Himalayan Mountaineering* (1999) which won the J.I. Stanley prize for best anthropology book in 2004.

Ortner's later work includes research relating to meanings of "class," where she carried out fieldwork among her own high school graduating class, and the relationship between American culture and Hollywood films.

Scope and Contents

The Sherry B. Ortner photographs relating to Sherpa research comprise photographs made during Ortner's fieldwork among the Sherpa communities of Nepal. They include photos from her doctoral research in the 1960s, as well as later research in the 1970s and 1990. Images show people, places, and events among the Sherpa communities in the Mt. Everest region. Also included to a lesser degree are photographs in and around Kathmandu.

Arrangement

The collection is organized into four series:

- Series 1. Sherpa research, 1966-1968
 - Series 2. Sherpa research and film expedition, 1976
 - Series 3. Sherpa research, 1979
 - Series 4. Sherpa research, 1990
-

Selected Bibliography

1978. *Sherpas and their Rituals*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

1989. *High Religion: A Cultural and Political History of Sherpa Buddhism*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.

1999. *Life and Death on Mt. Everest: Sherpas and Himalayan Mountaineering*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.

Names and Subject Terms

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

Subjects:

Sherpa (Nepalese people)

Geographic Names:

Nepal

Container Listing

Series 1: Sherpa research, 1966-1968

1 Linear foot

Series 1 comprise photographs from Ortner's doctoral research carried out primarily in the Sherpa village of Junbesi in the Solukhumbu region of Nepal. Included are images of people and events such as a wedding and a funeral, treks to various sites, temples and monasteries, and landscapes.

Photographs are organized by topic, event, or trip.

| | |
|-------|--|
| Box 1 | In and around Kathmandu <i>37 Slides</i> |
| Box 1 | Trek from Kathmandu to Junbesi (Zhung) village <i>16 Slides</i> |
| Box 1 | In and around Junbesi (Zhung) village in the lower Sherpa valley of Solu (Shorieng) <i>30 Slides</i> |
| Box 1 | Village temple (Gompa) <i>11 Slides</i> |
| Box 1 | People, sites, and rituals related to the monastic complex in the Solu (Shorieng) valley <i>36 Slides</i> |
| Box 1 | People of Junbesi village <i>79 Slides</i> |
| Box 1 | People working <i>16 Slides</i> |
| Box 1 | School picnic in Zhung <i>30 Slides</i> |
| Box 1 | Wedding <i>18 Slides</i> |
| Box 1 | Funeral <i>14 Slides</i> |
| Box 1 | Pilgrimage to sacred Milk Lake (Omi Tso) <i>17 Slides</i> |

- Box 1 Trek to Khumbu in the upper Sherpa Valley
35 Slides

- Box 1 In and around Khumbu
38 Slides

- Box 1 Visit to Thami Gompa monastery on the west side of Khumbu
38 Slides

- Box 1 Visit to Tengboche monastery for annual Mani Rimdu festival
38 Slides

- Box 1 Show by Tibetan traveling drama troupe in Chialsa
29 Slides

- Box 1 Anthropologists
9 Slides

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Series 2: Sherpa research and film expedition, 1976

1 Linear foot

Series 2 comprise photographs made in 1976 during Ortner's fieldwork as well as the filming for Grenada Television's *Disappearing World* series episode "Sherpas."

Subseries Part I includes photos from Ortner's visit to Junbesi and later trek to Khumbu. Ortner states "I went ahead of the crew to visit . . . Junbesi and then trekked to Khumbu to lay the groundwork for the shoot."

Subseries Part II includes photos from "the arrival of the [film] crew through shooting of film, mostly in the Thami area of Khumbu."

Photographs are organized by topic, event, or trip.

Part I

| | |
|-------|---|
| Box 2 | Kathmandu <i>23 Slides</i> |
| Box 2 | Helicopter ride from Kathmandu to Junbesi <i>6 Slides</i> |
| Box 2 | Scenes from Solu region <i>17 Slides</i> |
| Box 2 | People of Junbesi <i>75 Slides</i> |
| Box 2 | Sehlo Gompa <i>14 Slides</i> |
| Box 2 | Tupden Choling (Tushi Rimpoche new monastery) <i>15 Slides</i> |
| Box 2 | Trek from Junbesi to Thami <i>22 Slides</i> |
| Box 2 | Khumbu upper valley <i>18 Slides</i> |
| Box 2 | Trek to Thami area in the west of Khumbu <i>13 Slides</i> |
| Box 2 | Thami people <i>29 Slides</i> |

Part II

- Box 2 Kathmandu, Lukla, and trek to Thami
38 Slides

- Box 2 Shooting in and around Thami
26 Slides

- Box 2 Household ritual in Thami, "HLACHETUP"
13 Slides

- Box 2 Wedding in Thami
15 Slides

- Box 2 Shooting scenes with Mingma's parents in Thami-teng
20 Slides

- Box 2 Thami Gompa monastery
20 Slides

- Box 2 Major ritual at Thami Gompa monastery, "DORSEM"
28 Slides

- Box 2 Back to Kathmandu, picnic with Mingma's family, visit to Kopan Gompa
13 Slides

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Series 3: Sherpa research, 1979

0.5 Linear feet

Series 3 comprise photographs relating to Ortner's monastery history project in Khumbu, which resulted in the publication *High Religion*.

Box 3

Monastery history project in Khumbu
194 Slides

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Series 4: Sherpa research, 1990

0.5 Linear feet

Series 4 comprise photographs of Sherpas that Ortner interviewed for her mountaineering history project, which resulted in the publication *Life and Death on Mt. Everest*.

Box 3

Mountaineering history project
88 Photographic prints (and associated 35mm negatives)

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