

BIWEEKLY COLLOQUIA SUMMER TERM 2021



Animated stones and animal sacrifices in the highlands of Odisha (India): environment as socio-cosmic order

Monday, 10 May 2021 / 16.15 - 17.45 / virtual meeting

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This presentation focuses on the ritual practices of swidden cultivators in the highlands of Odisha (India) called Dongria Kond, who are recognised as one of the many tribal societies and original inhabitants ("Adivasi") of this area. Like other Kond tribes, they regularly practice large scale buffalo sacrifices to their earth goddess, who is represented by a stone setting in the center of each village. The earth goddess is regarded as the mother of the Kond and is responsible for their well-being. However, she is only one of the many deities and spiritual beings who according to the Kond populate their environment. The sun and the moon, the wind and the rain, mountains and hills, plants and animals, forests and rivers – the whole socio-cosmic space is, in the view of the Kond, populated by various powers with whom they maintain relationships. Ritual practices such as the buffalo sacrifices are major occasions when these relationships are activated and maintained through communication, possession and the sacrifice of animals and food. Some of these divine actors are represented by stones of varying sizes, including large megaliths representing

the husband of the earth goddess. The presentation will particularly focus on the nexus between stones, deities, social categories, sacrificial offerings, and local notions of well-being.

Contact:

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