

Curriculum vitae

Kikee Doma Bhutia

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Fields of research

ETIS RESEARCH FIELD: 2. Culture and Society; 2.4. Cultures Research; CERCS RESEARCH FIELD: H400 Folklore ; SPECIFICATION: Folklore

ETIS RESEARCH FIELD: 2. Culture and Society; 2.13. Political Science and Administration; CERCS RESEARCH FIELD: S170 Political and administrative sciences ; SPECIFICATION: Publications and research on topic relating to International Relations and Political science

Institutions and positions

01.11.2024– 31.10.2025	University of Tartu, Faculty of Arts and Humanities, School of Theology and Religious Studies, Research Fellow in Asian Studies (1,00)
01.09.2022– 31.08.2024	University of Tartu, Faculty of Arts and Humanities, School of Theology and Religious Studies, Research Fellow in Asian Studies (1,00)
20.08.2016– 07.03.2022	University of Tartu, Faculty of Arts and Humanities, Institute of Cultural Research, PhD Student (1,00)
11.09.2020– 31.08.2021	University of Tartu, Faculty of Arts and Humanities, Institute of Cultural Research, Junior Research Fellow in Folkloristics (0,50)
10.01.2020– 15.06.2020	The Center of Folklore Studies, The Ohio State University, Visiting Fellow
10.01.2018– 01.06.2018	The Department of Religious Studies, University of Toronto, Visiting Fellow

R&D related managerial and administrative work

2014–2016 Namgyal Institute of Tibetology, Research Assistant, At the Institute, she translated and compiled a volume on Bhutia Proverbs and Sayings which was released in a series of 50 short video recordings. She also assisted in the translation and subtitling of three ethnographic films titled: Pang Lhabsol, The National Ritual of the Land, and its Guardian Deities (2015); Drokpa – the Yak Herders of Sikkim (2017) and Garpo: The Mani Stone Carver of Tashiding (2022).

Creative work

2014- Lead role in Bhutia Music Video Album titled 'Drenso' (Memories) in Lhopo (Bhutia/Sikkimese) Language (Sikkim, : Bhutia Kayrab Yargey Tsogpa (Bhutia Language Preservation Association)).

2014-2016 Lead- actress in the first Sikkimese Full-Length indigenous movie -Dhokbu – The Keeper, focuses on the supernatural landscape and its non-human entities..

Additional information

Academic degrees

Kikee Doma Bhutia, Doctor's Degree, 2022, (sup) Ülo Valk, Mythic History, Belief Narratives and Vernacular Buddhism among the Lhopos of Sikkim, University of Tartu, Faculty of Arts and Humanities, Institute of Cultural Research

Honours & awards

2025 Basic Funding University of Tartu Grant

2021 Recipient of the Khyentse Foundation PhD Scholarship to support Individuals who are currently working towards a doctorate in Buddhist Studies

2018 Student Prize for best paper by the Belief Narrative Network (BNN), International Society of Folk Narrative Research (ISFNR)

2016 Dora+ PhD Scholarship by European Regional Development Fund.

Additional information

Conference and Presentations (5 last years, selected): 2020:The Revengeful Deity: The Concept of Bribing the Gods among the Lhopos of Sikkim (International Academic Conference on Demonology as a Semiotic System. Organized by the Centre for the Typology and Semiotics of Folklore and Centre of Visual Research of the Middle Ages and the New Age of the Russian State Humanitarian University, Moscow, Russia.

Zoom Online Presentation). 2020: Multiplicity and Comparability of Narratives among the Different Ethnic Communities in Sikkim (Young Folkloristic Conference: Lore Makers, LawBreakers: Tradition, Change, and People, Tartu, Estonia). 2020: Looking back into the Glorious Past: Revival of the Ethnic Bhutia Identity through Ritual Performance (American Folklore Society, Tulsa, USA). 2020: How did I survived the Pandemic? Buddhism, Black Lives Matter and Covid19 (International Webinar on Mapping Folklore Study: Diverse Approaches. Organized by IQAC, Habraghat Mahavidyalaya, Krishna Goalpara, Assam, India). 2021: Death by Poisoning: Narratives of the Cautionary Tales and the Inter-Ethnic Accusation (Tibetan Student Graduate Seminar, University of Oxford). 2021: The 'Moving Lake' of Sikkim: Controversies and Conversion of the Sacred landscape (International Conference on Chinese Studies in honor of academician B.L. Rfitin. Organized by National Research University, Higher School Of Economic; Beijing Normal University and the University of Tartu, Estonia, Zoom Presentation). 2022: The Moving Lake of Sikkim: Controversies and Conversion of the Sacred Landscape (International Congress "Juri Lotman's Semiosphere. Organized by Tallinn University and the University of Tartu, Estonia). 2022: Reinvention of Religion and Ritual Amidst Covid19 in Sikkim (Pandemics in Local and Historical Cosmologies: From the earliest Documents to Covid-19. International Multidisciplinary conference. Organized by: Centre for Oriental studies and Department of Estonian & Comparative Folklore- University of Tartu; Groupe Sociétés, Religions, Laïcités – École pratique des hautes études; Institut für Religionswissenschaft – Universität Bern; Abteilung für Mongolistik und Tibetstudien Institut für Orient und Asienwissenschaften (IOA) - Universität Bonn). 2022: Beyul Drémojong: Reimagining Lhopo's Sacred Landscape (European Association for the Study of Religions: Religions and The State of Freedom, University of Cork, Ireland). 2022: Intermediaries between the Past and the Present: Understanding Emotional Archiving of the memories Through Objects and Narratives (16th Seminar of the International Association of Tibetan Studies: Bhutan and Sikkim Panel. Charles University, Prague, Czech Republic). 2022: Intermediaries between the Past and the Present: Understanding Emotional Archiving of the Memories Through Objects and Narratives (Young Folkloristics Conference: The Stuff of Tradition: Materiality and Media in Folklore Studies, Helsinki, Finland). 2022: The Importance of Vernacular Symbols in Times of Crisis: Ukraine as case study (Lee Kwan Yew Policy Center, National University of Singapore) 2023: Transformation of the Indigenous Belief and the Changing Meaning of Sacred Landscape (Buddhist, Spiritual, Esoteric and Ecological Movement in the 21st Century: A DYNAMIC LEGACY Conference. University of Copenhagen, Denmark) 2024: India China Border Conflict and the Local Community in the Himalayas (Institute of South Asian Studies, National University of Singapore) 2024: Intersectional Subalternity and the Case of Cinematic Storytelling in Regional South Asian Films. (19th International Society of Folk Narrative Research Conference, Latvia). 2024: An Analysis of Border Conflict in the Himalayas surrounding India & China from a local perspective. (21st European Association of Chinese Studies, University of Tallinn, Estonia). 2024: A Reimagining of Sikkim's Sacred landscape: Narratives of Conflict and Controversy. Lecture series talk at the Department of Asian and Islamic Art History, University of Bonn, Germany. 2024: Insights into the Sacred Landscape of Sikkim: Transformation and Changing Meaning of Indigenous Beliefs. (American Academy of religion, San Deigo, US).

2016 - Translation and compilation of a volume on Bhutia Proverbs and Sayings. 2017 - Directed a series of video recordings on Bhutia Proverbs and Sayings for Internet upload.

2013 – 2016 Research Assistant, Namgyal Institute of Tibetology, Gangtok (Sikkim) Responsibilities included: assisting in the translation and subtitling of three ethnographic

films titled: Pang Lhabsol, The National Ritual of the Land, and its Guardian Deities (2015); Drokpa: The Yak-Herders of North Sikkim (2017); and Garpo: The Mani Stone Carver of Tashiding (2019).

Education

17.08.2016– 07.03.2022	PhD in Folkloristics, University of Tartu
01.09.2014– 01.08.2016	Research Assistant at Namgyal Institute of Tibetology, Sikkim
01.06.2011– 01.06.2014	Master's degree in English Literature, North-Eastern Hill University, Shillong, India
2008–01.04.2011	Bachelor's degree in English Honors, Government College, Namchi, Sikkim University, Sikkim, India

Projects in progress

- SHVUS23369 "China's and India's foreign policy and sustainable development in the new geopolitical context" (05.07.2023–31.05.2027); Principal Investigator: Elo Süld; University of Tartu, Faculty of Arts and Humanities, School of Theology and Religious Studies; Financier: Ministry of Foreign Affairs; Financing: 365 000 EUR.
- MHVUS22427R (101061483) "ReConnect China: generating independent knowledge for a resilient future with China for Europe and its citizens" (01.11.2022–31.10.2026); Principal Investigator: Elo Süld; University of Tartu, Faculty of Arts and Humanities, School of Theology and Religious Studies (partner); Financier: European Commission; Financing: 363 063 EUR.

Completed projects

- PRG670 "Vernacular Interpretations of the Incomprehensible: Folkloristic Perspectives Towards Uncertainty" (01.01.2020–31.12.2024); Principal Investigator: Ülo Valk; University of Tartu, Faculty of Arts and Humanities, Institute of Cultural Research; Financier: Estonian Research Council; Financing: 1 213 125 EUR.
- EMP340 "Re-storied Sites and Routes as Inclusive Spaces and Places: Shared Imaginations and Multi-layered Heritage" (01.01.2020–31.03.2024); Principal Investigator: Ülo Valk; University of Tartu, Faculty of Arts and Humanities, Institute of Cultural Research (coordinator); Financier: Estonian Research Council; Financing: 356 639 EUR.
- SHVUS22284 "The impact of the Ukrainian war on geopolitical developments in South Asia. Analysis in collaboration with Singaporean researchers" (23.05.2022–19.04.2023); Principal Investigator: Elo Süld; University of Tartu, Faculty of Arts and Humanities, School of Theology and Religious Studies (coordinator); Financier: Ministry of Foreign Affairs; Financing: 150 000 EUR.
- SHVUS22211 "The Political, Economic and Cultural Role of Asia for Northern and Eastern Europe" (18.04.2022–17.04.2023); Principal Investigator: Elo Süld; University of Tartu, Faculty of Arts and Humanities, School of Theology and Religious Studies (coordinator); Financier: Ministry of Foreign Affairs; Financing: 67

500 EUR.

- PSG48 "Performative negotiations of belonging in contemporary Estonia" (01.01.2018–31.12.2021); Principal Investigator: Elo-Hanna Seljamaa; University of Tartu, Faculty of Arts and Humanities, Institute of Cultural Research (coordinator); Financier: Estonian Research Council; Financing: 341 800 EUR.
- IUT2-43 "Tradition, creativity and society: minorities and alternative discourses" (01.01.2013–31.12.2018); Principal Investigator: Ülo Valk; University of Tartu, Faculty of Arts and Humanities, Institute of Cultural Research (coordinator); Financier: Estonian Research Council; Financing: 816 727 EUR.

Supervised dissertations

- Tinglu Cao, Master's Degree, 2024, (sup) Alevtina Solovyeva; Kikee Doma Bhutia, The Influence of Buddhist Concepts on Patients and Their Support Networks in Chinese Hospice Care, University of Tartu, Faculty of Social Sciences, School of Economics and Business Administration

Teaching

Methods of Data Collection and Analysis (HVKU.03.013).

Methods of Data Collection and Analysis (HVKU.03.013).

Participant Observation & Fieldwork experiences

Methods of Data Collection and Analysis (HVKU.03.013).

Methods of Data Collection and Analysis (HVKU.03.013).

Participant Observation & Fieldwork experiences

Religion and Culture in South Asia

A course on religion and culture in South Asia developed as MOOC Online lecture series in collaboration with University of Turku Finland

Traditions and Innovations in Contemporary East and South Asia

Traditions and Innovations in Contemporary East and South Asia

Guest Lecture at Asian and Oriental Institute

Religions, Philosophies, and Authorities in East and South Asia

Religions, Philosophies, and Authorities in East and South Asia

Guest Lecture at Asian and Oriental Institute

Introduction to Sikkim and Folk Practices among the Lhopos

Introduction to Sikkim and Folk Practices among the Lhopos

Guest lecture at Asian and Oriental Institute,

Communities at the Margins: Folklore and Religion in Contemporary Mongolia, Sikkim, and China (6ECTS)

Communities at the Margins: Folklore and Religion in Contemporary Mongolia, Sikkim, and China (6ECTS)

Methods of Data Collection and Analysis (HVKU.03.013)

Methods of Data Collection and Analysis (HVKU.03.013).

Participant Observation & Fieldwork experiences

Public outreach

Literature and Folklore Talk

Eight renowned scholars from India, US, Baltic and western Europe were invited to participate and present thought-provoking research on religion and folklore. This initiative was also a result of shift to virtual talk during the Covid19 times. These talks were recorded and published in UTTV, University of Tartu

What the Folk Podcast

This podcast focuses on two folklorists discussing through a structured stream of consciousness, the possibilities and anxieties of being an academic in folklore scholarship, which is competitive and highly specialized. Aside from our personal experiences, academic journeys and fieldwork stories, we also bring aspect of folklore such as belief, narratives, rituals practices, pop-culture and hope to break down select academic jargon, with the sole objective to make academia accessible.

Invited Lecture

Introduction to Folklore and Folk Belief at Namchi Government College, Sikkim

Invited Lecture

Introduction to Sikkimese Folklore and Tradition at Stella Maris College, Chennai

Publications

2025

Kikee Doma Bhutia (2025). Venemaa suhted Hiina ja Indiaga pärast sissetungi Ukrainasse: mõju Eestile ja Balti riikidele [Russia's relations with China and India after the invasion of Ukraine. Impact on Estonia and the Baltic States]. 1–20.

2024

Kikee Doma Bhutia (2024). Examining ‘Vernacular’ Symbols and Symbolic Power in Times of Crisis. *Journal of Ethnology and Folkloristics*, 18 (2), 30–48. DOI: 10.2478/jef-2024-0019.

Agnieszka Nitza-Makowska, Anastasia Sinitsyna Kikee Doma Bhutia (2024). Russia's relations with China and India after the invasion of Ukraine. Impact on Estonia and the Baltic States [Venemaa suhted Hiina ja Indiaga pärast sissetungi Ukrainasse: mõju Eestile ja Balti riikidele]. 1–16.

Kikee Doma Bhutia (2024). Interpretive Shifts, Discourse on Possession and Reified Institutional Truths of Reincarnation Claims in Contemporary Sikkim. In: KUMAGAI Seiji , Miguel Álvarez ORTEGA , Françoise POMMARET , Anna Balikci DENJONGPA (Ed.). *Traditional Neighbors, Different Modernities. Bhutan, Sikkim and the Mon Region.* (153–183). Kyoto Publication & Trans Pacific Publication.

Kikee Doma Bhutia (2024). <https://diplomaatia.ee/india-lahis-ida-euroopa-majanduskoridor-kuidas-rakendada-selle-potentsiaali-estli-kasvuks/> [India - Middle East - Europe economic corridor: how to use its potential for the growth of Estonia]. India - Middle East - Europe economic corridor: how to use its potential for the growth of Estonia, 1–14, 25.10.2024.

2023

Agnieszka Nitza-MAKOWSKA, Kikee Doma BHUTIA, Urmas HÖBEPAPPEL, Lelde LUIK, Anastasia SINITSYNA & Elo SÜLD (2023). Mapping the Scope of China's Soft Power in Estonia. Mapping the Scope of China's Soft Power in Estonia, 1728, 1–24, 07.09.2023.

Agnieszka NITZA-MAKOWSKA, Kikee Doma BHUTIA, Urmas HÖBEPAPPEL, Lelde LUIK, Anastasia SINITSYNA, and Elo SÜLD (2023). Mapping the scope of China's soft power in Estonia. *East Asian Policy*, 15 (4), 22–37. DOI: 10.1142/S1793930523000272.

Lelde Luik Agnieszka Nitza-Makowska Anastasia Sinitsyna Elo Suld (2023). "Russia's War in Ukraine: Perspectives in China, India and Singapore". 1–14.

Kikee Doma Bhutia (2023). Dialogue with the Shindré: Death Rituals Among the Lhopo of Sikkim. In: Parjanya Sen, Anup Shekhar Chakraborty (Ed.). *Death and Dying in Northeast India. Indigeneity and Afterlife.* (162–176). Routledge India. (Death and Dying in Northeast India: Indigeneity and Afterlife). DOI: 10.4324/9781003406693-12.

Kikee Doma Bhutia (2023). Maailma kahe suurriigi – India ja Hiina – vastasseis Himaalaja piirkonnas [The confrontation between the world's two superpowers - India and China - in the Himalayan region]. *Diplomaatia*, 1–6.

2022

Bhutia, Kikee Doma (2022). *Mythic History, Belief Narratives and Vernacular Buddhism among the Lhopos of Sikkim.* (Doktoritöö, University of Tartu). University of Tartu: University of Tartu.

2021

Kikee Doma Bhutia (2021). Death by Poisoning: Cautionary Narratives and Inter-Ethnic Accusations in Contemporary Sikkim. *Journal of Ethnology and Folkloristics*, 15 (1), 65–84. DOI: 10.2478/jef-2021-0005.

Kikee Doma Bhutia (2021). "A World Where Many Worlds Fit": Understanding Cosmopolitics through Narratives of Possessions and Spirit Invocation among the Lhopos (Bhutia) in Sikkim. *Narrative Culture*, 8 (2), 263–280. DOI: 10.13110/narrcult.8.2.0263.

Kikee Doma Bhutia (2021). Book Review Landscape Ritual and Identity among the Hyolmo of Nepal Vitality of Indigenous Religions. In: . (262–264). 07.12.2021 *Journal of Ethnology and Folkloristics*.

2019

Bhutia, Kikee D. (2019). "I EXIST THEREFORE YOU EXIST, WE EXIST THEREFORE THEY EXIST": NARRATIVES OF MUTUALITY BETWEEN DEITIES (YUL-LHA GZHI BDAG) AND LHOPO (BHUTIA) VILLAGERS IN SIKKIM. *Folklore: Electronic Journal of Folklore*, 75, 191–206. DOI: <http://doi.org/10.7592/FEJF2019.75.bhutia>.