



Call for Papers

SEECHAC

Société Européenne pour l'Étude des Civilisations de l'Himalaya et de l'Asie Centrale
European Society for the Study of Central Asian and Himalayan Civilisations

in collaboration with

THE FACULTY OF ORIENTAL STUDIES, UNIVERSITY OF WARSAW

invite contributions for the

International Conference

Heaven and Hell and What Lies Between: Representing the Afterlife from Central Asia to the Himalayas

Monday 13 to Wednesday 15 November 2023

University of Warsaw

SEECHAC is happy to announce that its next international meeting will be held in Warsaw from 13-15 November 2023. We invite contributions that adopt a multidisciplinary approach to the theme of heaven, hell and the afterlife in art and literature.

Rewards await the righteous and punishments attend the wicked after their departure from mortal life. This is a belief that is shared by all the major religions from Central Asia to the Himalayas and, of course, well beyond these regions. This general formulation embraces a wide spectrum of notions about the nature of heaven and hell: they may be temporary or permanent places or conditions, and may be partitioned into many component territories with characteristics appropriate to the particular forms of goodness or wrongdoing that distinguished the earthly lives of their inhabitants. The routes to these destinations may themselves have an elaborate topography, fraught with predatory demons and other challenges for the recently deceased, often with intermediary stopping places along the way. We know what these places look like thanks to the more-or-less detailed descriptions that are found in the literature, whether the canonical works of the religions in question or the accounts of visionaries who have been permitted to visit them without having to depart their mortal lives forever, often in the company of semi-divine guides who point out to them the major landmarks and introduce them to the supernatural personalities encountered in the course of their visit.

But literature is not the only medium: heaven and hell, and post-mortem realms more generally, have long been a favourite theme among painters and other artists, featuring especially on the walls of shrines and temples as encouragements and warnings to worshippers, pilgrims and other visitors.

If you would like to present a paper at this conference, **please send a title and an abstract of not more than 500 words to seechac.warsaw@uw.edu.pl on the attached conference form by 30 April 2023.**

Due to the high number of expected participants and the limited number of time slots for the presentation of papers, the organisers will have to make a selection based on the abstracts submitted. All participants will be notified by **15 June 2023** about whether their papers have been accepted.

The conference fee will be **150 Euros**, which will cover conference materials, coffee breaks, three lunches and two dinners. Details will be sent to the accepted speakers.

The definitive programme will be announced by **1 October 2023**.

On behalf of the Organising Committee:

Prof. Agata Bareja-Starzyńska (University of Warsaw)
Prof. Agnieszka Helman-Ważny (University of Warsaw)
Prof. Charles Ramble (President of SEECHAC)