Call for Papers – conference by the Department of Comparative Religion: “Human-Animal 
Relationships in Religious Traditions”, September 25-27, 2014, in Bonn, Germany

The relationships among humans and animals are highly divers. The roles and places of animals 
regarding humans vary considerably. Roughly, three categories can be discerned:

Animal life is not attributed with worth or meaning, unless, to define it as lower than human life. 
Animals are subservient and subordinate to humans and used by them – as means of labor or 
transport and as a source of food and clothing. If conceived as disrupting, the animals are either 
ignored or eliminated.

Animal life is seen as having its own worth and dignity. Animals are equals to humans and are 
perceived by them as fellow sufferers, friends and companions, as helpers or as equal 
opponents/enemies. Animals are accorded with respect, their life is protected or/and 
encouraged.

Animal life is bestowed with higher worth as human life. Animals are superior and can be 
revered and feared as friends and foes. In both cases animals are in a position from which they 
serve as an example. Identification, reverence or fear can lead to totemizing, deifying or 
demonizing of animals or animal traits.

The relationships are defined by culture but can also vary considerably within a single culture 
and among different species.

During the conference human – animal relationships are to be analyzed in their cultural settings 
whereby special attention is to be given to the religious context.

In this regard we can observe animal-shaped gods, totem-animals, helpful and protective spirits, 
animal incarnations and teachers, demons and harmful spirits, but also (implicitly and explicitly) 
formulated rules of engagement and treatment with and of animals or non-human life.

Thus, formative myths and practices, religious cosmology and ethics and their consequences 
for ecology and conduct could be discussed.

Application: Please register your paper or panel with us by March 31, 2014.

Please send an abstract of approximately 200 words no later than September 5, 2014.

At the conference, 20 minutes will be reserved for your lecture followed by 10 minutes for 
discussion.

Publication: Selected papers from the conference will be published. We kindly invite you to 
submit your article by January 6, 2015.

Registration: The registration fee is 25 €. The fee should be paid in cash upon arrival. It 
includes lunch on Friday and coffee and snacks during the conference. The registration fee 
does not include any travel expenses or accommodation.

Schedule:

31.3 2014: Submission of panels and papers
05.9 2014: Submission of abstracts

25-27.9 2014: Conference

06.1 2015: Submission of articles for the conference proceedings

Conference Venue/Address:

Institute of Oriental and Asian Studies
Dept. of Comparative Religion
Bonn University
Adenauerallee 4-6
53113 Bonn, Germany

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WELCOME!