

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 diverse. 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!