



The plane "Yeti" during the Swiss expedition in the Daulaghiri (1960)

THE ALPS AND ASIA ASIA AND THE ALPS

INTERCONNECTED MOUNTAIN REGIONS?
19-20TH CENTURY

International congress | 10 and 11 June 2024

SHORT ARGUMENTATION

In the year 1960, the expedition of a dozen of Swiss mountaineers onto the Dhaulagiri, a Himalayan Mountain that peaks at 8167 meters, becomes a sensation among the public well beyond the Swiss borders. The expedition combines scientific exploration and sporting performance and makes the most out of the means available at the time to get to the foothills of the Himalayan peaks as quickly as possible, such as the "Yeti" aircraft, used to transport equipment to expedition camps 1 and 2.

This venture -which remains unique to our days- uncovers the human effort of conquest directed at various mountain ranges. Quite emblematically, the use of helicopter or airplanes, which were previously tested in the Alps, demonstrates the transnational circulation of modern technologies onto mountainous terrains. For this reason, such highly mediatized events reveal that mountains have, within just a few decades, become extremely interconnected spaces: if the 1950s represent a milestone for the big and carefully organized expeditions aiming at Himalayan peaks, the European presence, as well as the Asian one (of people coming from other regions of this vast continent), dates back to the 19th century. Other traces of this interconnections are semantic: the spread of words such as "Alps" (with, notably, the presence of "Alps" in Japan and in New Zealand) or "Alpinism" (whose meaning has been reclaimed in South Korea designating a philosophy turning around mountaineering activities) confirm these exchanges and transfers brought by the ascensionist circles, which have internationalized their activities on a massive scale.

Having established this, the international colloquium **"The Alps and Asia / Asia and the Alps. Interconnected mountain regions?"** wants to dig deeper into these exchange processes, focusing onto the environmental, scientific, sporting and touristic stakes involved. Touching different mountainous geographical areas of the Asian continent (particularly the Japanese Alps, the Himalayas, the Ladakh Range, and the Pamir Mountains), the aim is to shed light onto the circulation of people, ideas, knowledge, goods and symbolic objects that have occurred during the 19th and 20th century between the Alpine regions and Asian mountains. More precisely, our aim is to study the different kinds of transfer that have taken place between these eastern or far-eastern mountainous regions and the Alpine ones, on a symmetric or asymmetric way.

There are two main objectives:

- Firstly, to interrogate the chronology and the networks of actors involved in these exchange processes (expeditions and/or other activities), more closely analyzing their reciprocal benefits, the hierarchies that were formed between them and the power-dynamics (or domination-dynamics) that are revealed through the evolution of the representation of the other.
- Secondly, to analyse the concrete effects that these exchanges have had onto the conception and representation of mountain spaces, their depiction spanning between being spaces to conquer, to exploit or environments to protect.

It will be given particular attention, taking a historical approach, to place these sport, socio-economic or political exchanges into their specific context, be it the Cold War or the unfolding process of decolonization.

This international colloquium is part of the project "The Globalization of the Alps. From the Landscape to the Environment (« La mondialisation des Alpes. Du paysage à l'environnement »)" which is currently being carried on at the University of Fribourg (CH) for the period 2022-2026 (<https://www.unifr.ch/histcont/fr/recherche/projets-de-recherche/>). This project especially aims at historically evaluating how, at what pace, by whom and with which goals the globalization process of the Alps during the 20th century has unfolded. The main focus will be on studying the tensions existing between the construction of an identity of the mountainous regions and the ever-stronger interconnections between them.

Inspired by Global (or connected) history works, we want to invite colleagues coming from various regions of the World to come and share their point of view and exchange their knowledge, expertise, and current research. The aim here is to take advantage of Switzerland's favorable position as a crossroads for a history of transnational circulations, conceived in a mountain environment open beyond the Alpine arc alone, conducive to exchanges and outside views. In this sense the program of these scientific days has been built to favor the multiplication of contacts, points of view and collaborations between contributions coming from specialists of extra-European history, and research linked to scientific institutions based in Switzerland:

- Alpine Museum Bern (Alpines Museum),
- Interdisciplinary Mountain Research Center,
- The Sport Sciences Institute of the University of Lausanne.

PRACTICAL INFORMATION

- The colloquium will take place at the Alpine Museum (10th of June) and at the University of Fribourg (11th of June). The goal is to assemble the highest possible number of participants that can attend in person. In case of issues of any sort, a system of distant meeting using Zoom will be organized.
- On the margin of the conferences, a “Japanese Evening” will take place on the 10th of June, which will allow the participants to continue the exchanges started during the panels in another form but still in the frame of a public event.
- The working language of the colloquium will be English.

ORGANISING COMMITTEE (BY ALPHABETICAL ORDER)

Christine **BICHSEL**

Katja **DOOSE**

Beat **HÄCHLER**

Claude **HAUSER**

Grégory **QUIN**

Philippe **VONNARD**

WITH THE HELP OF

Lucia **LEONI**

Maurizio **RASELLI**

SPEAKERS (BY ALPHABETICAL ORDER)

Prof. Dr. Tanya **BAKHMETYEVA**

Prof. Dr. Christine **BICHSEL**

Prof. Dr. Caleb **CARTER**

Prof. Dr. Pierre-Yves **DONZE**

Dr. Katja **DOOSE**

Dr. Maggie **GREENE**

Carole **FAESSLER**

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Prof. Dr. Michael **REIDY**

Dr. Carolin **ROEDER**

Dr. Carina **ROTH**

Dr. Gilles **RUDAZ**

Dr. Amanda **SHUMAN**

Prof. Dr. Laurent **TISSOT**

Dr. Philippe **VONNARD**

Prof. Dr. Stewart **WEAVER**

Prof. Dr. Chetan **SINGH**

Regina **WATKIN-KOLB**

DAY 1 – ALPINE MUSEUM / BERN

9:00-9:15. Welcome words

Beat HÄCHLER

9:15-9:30. Introduction

Claude HAUSER & Philippe VONNARD

9:30-10:30. Introductory Keynote

Peter HANSEN: *“Other Alps. Other Everests”*

Chair: Grégory QUIN

10:30-10:45. Short break

10:45-12:00. Roundtable. “Globalisation of the Alps?”

- Jon MATHIEU
- Carolin ROEDER
- Chetan SINGH (online)

Chair: Gilles RUDAZ

12:00-13:30. Lunch

13:30-14:30. From the Gastlosen to the Himalayas. Insight into Erhard Loretan’s archive at the Swiss Alpine Museum

Barbara KELLER & Carole FAESSLER

14:30-15:45. Panel I. Japanese Alps session. Part I

Caleb CARTER: “Conceptualizing a Japanese Alps: National and Transnational Constructs at the Turn of Japan’s 20th Century”

Fynn HOLM: “Racial and Cultural Hierarchies between Japanese Mountaineers and Swiss Mountain Guides, 1905-1957”

Pierre-Yves DONZE & Claude HAUSER: “Destination Alps: Japanese tourism in post-war Switzerland: growth and challenges”

Yuka MIYASHITA: “Timeless and culturally diverse in the Japanese Alps”

15:45-16:15. Break

16:15-17:00. Discussion about panel I

Chair: Carina ROTH

17:00-18:30. Break & Exhibition Visit

18:30-20:30. Japanese Alps session: Part II

Film screening: “Where Mountains fly” [directed by Sandra & Carina ROTH]

Following by a general discussion with (by alphabetical order):

- Ai OKUYAMA
- Carina ROTH
- Regina WATKIN-KOLB

Dinner in Alpine Museum

DAY 2 – UNIVERSITY OF FRIBOURG / ROOM 3120 – MIS 03

8:45-09:45. Panel II: Sciences and Mountains. A look at the Pamir mountains

Stewart **WEAVER** and Tanya **BAKHMETYEVA**: “To the Icy Heights: the German and Austrian Alpine Club and Modern Glaciological Research in the Alps, the Pamirs, and the Himalaya”

Katja **DOOSE**: “Training in the Alps – researching the Pamir Mountains. The GDR-Soviet glacier expeditions during the International Geophysical Year 1957/58”

Lachlan **FLEETWOOD**: “Reclaiming the ‘Roof of the World’: Imperial Appropriation of Mountain Imaginaries from the Pamir to the Himalaya”

09:45-10:30. Discussion about panel II

Chair: Eva **MAURER**

10:30-11:00. Break

11:00-12:00. Panel III: Environmental issues in the Himalayas

Michael **REIDY**: “Botany in the Himalayas: Evolution, Empire, and Environmental Transformation”

Lucia **LEONI**: “Asian mountain ranges seen through the lenses of European filmmakers: a case study of a selection of films submitted to the International Alpine film festival of Les Diablerets between 1969 and 1999”

Philippe **VONNARD**: “The Himalayas at the core of the environmental issues. UIAA conferences from Katmandu (1982) to Tokyo (1991).”

12:00-12:45. Discussion about panel III

Chair: Laurent **TISSOT**

12:45-14:30. Lunch

14:30-15:45. Panel IV: Mountaineering in the Himalayas: one practice, different stakes

Maggie **GREENE**: “Bureaucratic Hurdles: Bureaucracy, Diplomacy, and Mountain Climbing”

Young Hoon **OH**: “Alpinism as Philosophy: Internationalism and Hierarchy among Korean Ascensionists”

Maurizio **RASELLI**: “Swiss Mountaineers Going Global: Decoding the Marketing of a Himalaya Expedition”

Juliane **LANZ**: “Being with friends? Eastern German mountaineers in the Soviet Union”

15:45-16:00. Short break

16:00-16:45. Discussion about panel IV

Chair: Amanda **SHUMAN**

16:45-17:00. Last words and conclusion

Christine **BICHSEL** & Katja **DOOSE**

Dinner in Fribourg (optional)