

MARTIN CHAUTARI INVITES YOU TO A SEMINAR

Fighting for Tibet: Histories and Memories of the Chushi Gangdrug Army in Mustang and Beyond

by

Carole McGranahan

Martin Chautari Seminar Hall, Thapathali, 12 November 2017 (Sunday), 3:00pm

In the 1950s, thousands of ordinary Tibetans rose up to defend their country and religion against Chinese troops. Their Chushi Gangdrug citizen army fought through 1974 with covert support from the Tibetan exile government and the governments of India, Nepal, and the United States. Decades later, the story of this resistance has not fully entered the annals of Tibetan national history, and is an often misunderstood part of Nepali history. In “Fighting for Tibet,” this presentation shows how and why histories of this resistance army are “arrested” and explains the ensuing repercussions for the Tibetan refugee community, especially for those veterans who considered this service to the Dalai Lama the defining moment of their lives.

Drawing on two decades of ethnographic and historical research, this presentation tell the story of the Tibetan resistance and the social processes through which this history is made and unmade, and lived and forgotten in the present, including by Tibetan refugees in Nepal. Fulfillment of veterans’ desire for recognition hinges on the Dalai Lama and “historical arrest,” a practice in which the telling of certain past is suspended until an undetermined time in the future. In this analysis, struggles over history emerge as a profound pain of belonging. Tibetan cultural politics, regional identities, and religious commitments cannot be disentangled from imperial histories, contemporary geopolitics, and romanticized representations of Tibet and Buddhism. Including armed struggle and nonviolent hunger strikes, and moving from diplomatic offices to refugee camps, the story of the Chushi Gangdrug army provides powerful insights into the stakes of political engagement and the cultural contradictions of everyday life.

Carole McGranahan is associate professor of anthropology at the University of Colorado. She holds a PhD in anthropology and history from the University of Michigan, and is the author of *Arrested Histories: Tibet, the CIA, and Memories of a Forgotten War* (Duke University Press, 2010). She is the co-editor of *Self Immolation as Protest in Tibet* (2012), and is the lead editor of the forthcoming volume *The Tibet Reader: Culture, History, Politics*. She has written numerous articles about Tibet including “Narrative Dispossession: Tibet and the Gendered Logics of Historical Production,” “Mao in Tibetan Disguise: History, Ethnographic Theory, and Excess,” “Empire Out-of-Bounds: Tibet in the Era of Decolonization,” and “*Sa spang mda’ gnam spang mda’*: Murder, History, and Social Politics in 1920s Lhasa.” Currently, she is finishing a book about the Pangdatsang family and twentieth century Tibetan history, and conducting research on “refugee citizenship” in the Tibetan diaspora in India, Nepal, New York City, and Toronto.

Martin Chautari, 27 Jeetjung Marg
Thapathali, Kathmandu, Nepal
Tel: +977-1-4102027/4238050
www.martinchautari.org.np

This is a public event and participation is open to all. The presentation will be in English.