
PART IV

Scholars, Power, and Knowledge Production

Trine Brox and Miriam Koktvedgaard Zeitzen

Prince Peter's Seven Years in Kalimpong: Collecting in a Contact Zone

Abstract The main protagonist of this paper is H.R.H. Prince Peter of Greece and Denmark (1908–1980), an old-world ethnographer and explorer who went to Kalimpong in the 1950s, first as a member and later as the leader of the Third Danish Expedition to Central Asia. The expedition's aims were to explore and document empty spots on the map and to rescue the remnants of local cultures in Upper Asia. With the developing crisis in Tibet, however, Prince Peter was stranded in Kalimpong, waiting in vain for permission to enter Tibet. Yet unfavourable political circumstances turned into great opportunities for the expedition as the advance of the People's Liberation Army into Tibet led to a stream of refugees into Kalimpong: "We had been denied entry into Tibet, but Tibet had come to us." In this article, we explore Prince Peter's seven years in Kalimpong and how he navigated this particularly intense contact zone, negotiating difficult political, personal, and professional circumstances.

Introducing Prince Peter in Kalimpong

H.R.H. Prince Peter of Greece and Denmark was an old-world ethnographer and explorer who embodied the intellectual aristocrat who travelled in style to exotic places to study the local flora, fauna, and folk.¹ His mother's vast fortune supported Prince Peter and enabled him to dedicate his life to his travels and the pursuit of adventure on his own professional—and personal—terms. Yet this description fails to do justice to the thirst for knowledge and the quest to make scientific discoveries that drove him to travel to the far reaches of the world. In 1950, his travels took him to the north-east Indian Himalayan town of Kalimpong—"the little frontier town at the very gate of central Tibet" (Prince Peter 1963, 581). He arrived there in 1950 as part of, and later as the leader of the Third Danish Expedition to Central Asia. He was aiming for Tibet, but ended up staying in Kalimpong for seven years.² During those years, based in Kalimpong, Prince Peter not only became entangled in intense and sometimes conflictual political and personal relations with society there, but he also faced tremendous *professional* challenges because the expedition was stranded in this Himalayan town and unable to follow its intended trajectory into Upper Asia.

Prince Peter's unanticipated Kalimpong adventure nonetheless stands out from other ethnographic work done amongst Tibetans because of the variety and amount of material that he was able to collect during his stay there from January 1950 to February 1957. He acquired a rich collection of artefacts and books, photographs and moving images, sound recordings, and ethnographic information, as well as an astoundingly large body of physical anthropology data. He published several articles based on the data from the expedition, covering topics ranging from fraternal polyandry to anthropometrical studies, as well as investigations of Tibetan oracles, aristocrats, Muslims, and many others. Our preliminary inquiry reveals that between 1935 and 1980, Prince Peter published six books and over sixty articles, many of them for the general public. He also produced sixteen anthropological films. Almost half of

1 In this article we describe the results of a preliminary investigation conducted in 2014 into Prince Peter's seven years in Kalimpong. In March 2015 we presented these findings in our paper "The Third Danish Expedition to Central Asia—7 Years in Kalimpong" at the conference *Transcultural Encounters in the Himalayan Borderlands: Kalimpong as a "Contact Zone."* We would like to thank the convenors for inviting us to this inspiring event, and we are grateful to the Asian Dynamics Initiative at the University of Copenhagen for financing our participation in the conference and travel to Kalimpong. Thanks are also due to the Eastern Himalaya Research Network and the other participants at the conference, both the lecturers and the audience, whose positive and constructive responses to our paper are much appreciated.

2 Prince Peter also led the Danish Scientific Mission to Afghanistan (the Henning Haslund-Christensen Memorial Expedition) in 1953–54, in which several other Danish scientists participated (Prince Peter 1954b).

his work was published in the 1950s, professionally his most productive decade.³

Prince Peter's Kalimpong years were not only his most productive professionally, but also his most intense, personally and politically. For Prince Peter, and the many other explorers, ethnographers, and adventurers who lived in or travelled through the town, Kalimpong came to constitute a complex contact zone—one of those “social spaces where disparate cultures meet, clash and grapple with each other, often in highly asymmetrical relations of dominance and subordination” (Pratt 1992, 4). Contact zones are, from Marie Louise Pratt's perspective, fluid places and spaces of exchange and connectivity, spaces shaped by European expeditions into non-European worlds (Pratt 1992). Therefore, the concept of a contact zone is a useful tool for framing and understanding the many encounters and exchanges between the local and the global, the national and the transnational, and between identity and diversity, that took place during Prince Peter's sojourn in Kalimpong—a sojourn which in many and varied ways embodies the West's encounter with “the rest.”

Thus, Prince Peter's stationary expedition work obtaining permits, collecting artefacts, and interacting with interlocutors in Kalimpong could be understood as activities that took place within a complex contact zone. This paper represents a first attempt at exploring the ways in which Prince Peter's scientific pursuits became entangled with political and personal dramas in this multi-layered contact zone, where people from a variety of socio-cultural and ethnic-linguistic backgrounds moved in and out, oscillating between placement and displacement. We will investigate Kalimpong as a fluid and dynamic place containing various spaces of exchange and connectivity in which Prince Peter interacted with interlocutors, and will explore the transcultural knowledge spaces that emerge from their encounters. For analytical purposes, and to do justice to Prince Peter's many entanglements, we have conceptually subdivided Kalimpong into a geopolitical, an interpersonal, and an ethnographic contact zone. How Prince Peter navigated these multiple and complex contact zones, constantly negotiating difficult political, personal, and professional circumstances in a stream of social and cultural encounters and scientific challenges is one of the focal points of this paper.

Our second focal point is Prince Peter's initially reluctant abandonment of the expedition mode in favour of a more contemporary way of doing ethnographic fieldwork, that is, intense study in particular spaces.

3 Prince Peter's scholarly work had the greatest impact within Tibetan Studies in general and polyandry in particular, but he recognised the importance of a comparative social anthropology. Within that discipline, however, his research and writing gave him only a marginal position, apart from, perhaps, the role he played in introducing anthropology to Greece. He gave numerous lectures at, among other institutions, the University of Athens and the Anthropological Society in the late 1950s and early 1960s. He never obtained an academic position in Greece, and his monograph *The Science of Anthropology* did not receive good reviews (Agelopoulos 2013).

Operating within the old fashioned expedition mode, Prince Peter had been determined to travel to far-off places to penetrate new and unexplored worlds in order to document the many facets of the exotic and unknown civilizations he expected to encounter. He was part of a team composed of anthropologists, archaeologists, geographers, botanists, meteorologists, and religious studies scholars—scholars whose expertise, the result of their different scientific methods, was considered necessary to map out in their entirety the various constituents of a civilization. The team of Danish explorers was supposed to pass through Kalimpong, yet rather than being the intended gateway to Tibet, the town came to constitute a particular space in which Prince Peter conducted intense studies of Tibetans and their culture. As time passed and the expedition continued to be denied entry to Tibet, the other members of the expedition left one by one, and Prince Peter came to represent the expedition single-handedly, carrying the flag of the Explorers' Club, both metaphorically and literally, as the expedition's sole remaining participant.

In Kalimpong, Prince Peter attempted to salvage both tangible Tibetan cultural heritage, on commission from the Danish National Museum, and intangible cultural heritage, documenting particular Tibetan lifeways such as polyandry for posterity (Koktvedgaard Zeitzen 2008; Prince Peter 1963). Prince Peter's stay in Kalimpong foreshadowed contemporary anthropological fieldwork, where ethnographers work with people where they are when the fieldwork is being done, rather than where they are considered to have originated from. In 1950s Kalimpong, where both Prince Peter and his Tibetan interlocutors were embroiled in personal struggles of various kinds, the narrative identity they created was dynamic—and displaced. However, Prince Peter's goal was not to understand contemporary Tibetan lifeways in Kalimpong but rather, to collect and document Tibetan heritage as it was practiced where, in his view, it had originally belonged, that is, in Tibet proper. He filters his Tibetan interlocutors' accounts and artefacts through his own acquired anthropological narratives about Tibet, and, using this filter, extracted those elements he thought embodied authentic Tibetan cultural lifeways. By exploring Prince Peter's work in Kalimpong as taking place within a complex and contested contact zone, this paper attempts to take some initial steps in exploring his production of ethnographic knowledge and its entanglement with his Tibetan interlocutors and their own bodies of knowledge.

H.R.H. Prince Peter of Greece and Denmark

H.R.H. Prince Peter of Greece and Denmark was born in Paris in 1908. He was the son of Prince Georg of Greece and Denmark, brother to the Greek king. His mother was the famous psychiatrist Marie Bonaparte, who came from the immensely wealthy Blanc family of France, whose fortune derived from the Monte Carlo Casino. She became a psychiatrist after becoming a



Figure 1: Irina taking a rest on her way to Ladakh with Prince Peter in 1938; their pre-war Himalayan journey is described in Prince Peter's book *Chevauchée tibétaines*, Fernand Nathan, Paris 1958.

patient and later a close friend of Sigmund Freud; she is well-known for paying the ransom that enabled him to leave German-occupied Austria in 1938. Prince Peter's maternal grandfather was Prince Roland Napoléon Bonaparte, grandson of Emperor Napoleon's brother Lucien, and a famous botanist and explorer in his own right. He was a member of the 1886 French scientific expedition to northern Norway, where he photographed and took anthropometric measurements of indigenous Sami people (Bonaparte 1886).

Prince Peter led a life of luxury and enjoyed the high social status befitting his royal birth, yet when he married the twice-divorced Russian socialite Irina Alexandrovna Ovtchinnikova (b. 1904 in Saint Petersburg, d. 1990 in Paris) in Madras in 1939, his fortunes took an abrupt turn. His family did not approve of the marriage, and he was banished from the royal inner circles in Greece and Denmark. Distant places might have seemed even more attractive to the prince after his familial *déroute*, and his wife remained his loyal and intrepid companion during all his subsequent travels. Prince Peter's mother also remained devoted to her son, albeit at a distance, and continued to pay his personal expenses and finance his professional endeavours even after his rift with the royal families.

In 1937–39, Prince Peter undertook his first anthropological expedition to South Asia (figure 1). Together with his wife, Prince Peter carried out fieldwork among polyandrous groups in Ladakh, the Himalayas, and on the Malabar Coast. He had been broadly educated, studying first in Paris at the Sorbonne, where he became Docteur en Droit in 1934 with a thesis on Danish cooperatives. In 1935, he began post-graduate studies in

anthropology at the London School of Economics under the supervision of Bronislaw Malinowski. One of the founding fathers of modern anthropology, Malinowski pioneered ethnographic fieldwork as the hallmark of anthropological methodology. Malinowski may thus have inspired and encouraged Prince Peter to do intense, long-term fieldwork.

Prince Peter's travels were interrupted by the outbreak of the Second World War, during which he was stationed in Egypt as a captain in the Greek Army. He resumed his anthropological explorations in 1946 with an expedition to Afghanistan, and moved on to join the Third Danish Expedition to Central Asia in 1948. It was part of Denmark's participation in the race between nations to explore what Prince Peter called "little-known parts of the world" (Prince Peter 1954, 229). The overarching goal of the expedition was to explore *terra incognita* in Upper Asia. It had two objectives: firstly to explore and document Upper Asia, which was considered a blank spot on the map, and secondly to rescue the remnants of local cultures, which were assumed to be soon lost to the world. The expedition team under the prince's leadership was to head for Sikkim in the south, work its way to Lhasa and over the Tibetan Plateau to Alaša in Inner Mongolia, and from there into the territory of the "Yellow Uigurs" (Prince Peter 1954, 229).

Prince Peter arrived in Kalimpong in January 1950, intent on documenting Tibet, its people, and its culture, all of which were considered under threat from the encroaching modern world, which gave the expedition a sense of urgency.⁴ Tibet was perceived as an inaccessible, empty space on the map between India and China, yet to be discovered and documented by cartographers and ethnographers, a forbidden and isolated place that had to be forced open to reveal its secrets (Bishop 1989). In his book *Trespassers on the Roof of the World: The Race for Lhasa*, Peter Hopkirk articulates such a vision of Tibet, circulating at the time of Prince Peter's expedition: "Until the Chinese invasion, their spartan way of life had hardly changed since the Middle Ages. [...] Like Shangri-La, the 'lost' valley of James Hilton's *Lost Horizons*, Tibet was a land where time stood still and people had not yet lost their innocence. It was this, perhaps above all else, which made it so alluring to trespassers from the West" (Hopkirk 1982, 7).⁵ Prince Peter summed up the Western—and masculine—ethos of their expedition: "The people of Tibet are still practically unknown. From an anthropological and ethnological point of view, the country is virgin ground" (Prince Peter 1952, 281).

4 He had been to Kalimpong once before, in December 1938, doing research on polyandry (Prince Peter 1963).

5 In James Hilton's 1933 novel *Lost Horizon*, a plane crash in the Himalayas brought four Americans and Europeans to the utopian monastery of Shangri-La run by "the high lama," a Catholic missionary from Belgium. Shangri-La was a storehouse of European high culture and wisdom rescued from war and destruction, and hidden away in the Himalayas. Shangri-La had an enchanting effect on those who found the place and it was a remedy for materialism, spiritual decay, and old age. The idea of Tibet as synonymous with Shangri-La has since become part of Western popular culture.

Prince Peter was unable to enter Tibet because of the tense political situation, and the advancement of the People's Liberation Army (PLA) into Tibet in November 1950 left him stranded in Kalimpong. Yet the fruitless, seven-year wait for permission to enter Tibet nevertheless turned out to be Prince Peter's most productive phase professionally, as the PLA's presence in Tibet triggered a stream of Tibetan refugees into Kalimpong, creating a supply of potential interlocutors for his anthropological research (figure 2). He was, however, facing political, personal, and scientific challenges in this complex contact zone. From his exchange of letters with the Indian government and West Bengali authorities it is clear that they had little understanding of the scientific work he was doing. The Indian authorities grew increasingly concerned about him and his activities, in part because they suspected that his Russian wife was a spy. Eventually, Prince Peter and Irina were evicted from their house, and in February 1957 they left Kalimpong.

Spending seven years in Kalimpong and gaining first hand experience of Cold War politics and Communist China's advance into Tibet, which pushed Tibetans into exile, Prince Peter became deeply engaged in the Tibetan cause. As President of the Nordic Council for Tibetan Assistance, he was instrumental in helping Tibetans go to Scandinavia in the 1960s. In 1960, he helped arrange for twenty Tibetans aged eleven to sixteen to be educated in Denmark (Brox and Koktvedgaard Zeitzen 2016). His time in Kalimpong also fundamentally influenced his future academic trajectory. After returning to Europe, Prince Peter submitted his PhD dissertation on polyandry, based on his fieldwork in the Himalayas and southern India, to the London School of Economics. He received his PhD in 1959, and his seminal work on polyandry was published in 1963. He received an honorary doctorate from the University of Copenhagen in 1960, yet he never held an appointment at a university in Denmark or elsewhere. Nevertheless, he continued to travel and lecture at universities, explorers' clubs, and various venues, and to publish on Tibetan matters for both an academic audience and the general readership. Prince Peter was finally allowed to enter Tibet in 1979—in post-Mao China, when Deng Xiaoping's reforms opened the Tibetan plateau for Chinese business, immigration and tourism, and socio-economic reforms were intended to raise Tibet from the ruins of the Cultural Revolution. Prince Peter died a year later in London.

Kalimpong as a geopolitical contact zone

Kalimpong extends along a mountain ridge at a height of 1,300 meters in the Himalayan foothills of northern West Bengal, at the endpoint of a land corridor leading to Tibet. As the southern terminus of a commodity pathway starting at the Tibetan capital Lhasa and crossing over the Jelep mountain pass into India, it was the most important hill station in the region when Prince Peter stayed there. It had become the new economic capital of the region after the British Younghusband military expedition in



Figure 2: The photo bears the inscription "With compliments from Lakhmishand Kaluram. Kalimpong. 14/8/54" on the back; someone else has added that Prince Peter is standing next to the wife of a Tibetan Official.

1903–4 forced entry into Tibet and opened a trade route between Lhasa and Calcutta. Goods coming from Tibet through Kalimpong could thus be transported to the commercial port of Calcutta, and shipped onward to Europe and America (Hackett ND; Harris 2008, 2013). As a globally connected centre of Indo-Tibetan trade, Kalimpong attracted people from all over, making the town a classic example of a contact zone fuelled by a complex web of cultural, ethnic, caste, religious, and linguistic encounters. It was, in the words of Prince Peter's fellow scholar and friend René de Nebesky-Wojkowitz (figure 3), the "city of the seven new years," because here "practically all peoples living in the Himalayas and adjacent territo-



Figure 3: On their way to Gangtok. The three men are photographed outside the Himalayan Hotel in Kalimpong May 2, 1951. Next to Prince Peter is his friend and colleague René de Nebesky-Wojkowitz.

ries" congregated and each group celebrated its new year according to its own calendar (Nebesky-Wojkowitz 1956b, 55, 66). The multitude of festivals testified to the cultural diversity of Kalimpong. Here, Tibetan, Marwari, Newari, and Kashmiri traders as well as Chinese merchants joined the many indigenous ethnic peoples and non-native groups coming and going to and from Kalimpong. Among them were Buddhist masters and their entourages, elite Tibetan politicians and nobility, royalty in exile, indigenous Lepchas, spies of the great powers, colonial holiday-goers, Scottish missionaries, European Tibetologists and ethnographers, and, following the PLA's advancement into Tibet in 1950, an increasing number of Chinese and Tibetan refugees.

Kalimpong thus not only constituted a cultural juncture, it was also a frontier, a borderland, and a political edge. Wedged between Sikkim, Bhutan,

Nepal, and Tibet, regional and national interests often converged and at times clashed in Kalimpong. In effect, it represented a Tibet *in absentia*, a player as well as a pawn in “the Great Game,” in which China, Russia, and Great Britain fought to gain a foothold in High Asia (Hopkirk 1990). Prince Peter stayed there at the height of the Cold War, when the agents of a newly independent India and competing empires congregated in Kalimpong, transforming it into a political gossip factory, and, in the words of Chinese President Mao Zedong, “a centre of espionage, primarily American and British” (quoted in Shakya 1999, 158). Indian President Nehru was indeed concerned about the number of potential spies, and he was under increasing pressure internally and externally as a result of the tense political situation. At a parliament hearing in the Lower House, *Lok Sabha*, he said about Kalimpong:

Kalimpong, Sir, has been often described as a nest of spies, spies of innumerable nationalities, not one, spies, spies from Asia, spies from Europe, spies from America, spies of Communists, spies of anti-Communists, red spies, white spies, blue spies, pink spies and so on. [...] This has been going on for the last few years so there is no doubt that so far as Kalimpong is concerned there has been a deal of espionage and counter-espionage and a complicated game of chess by various nationalities and various members of spies and counter-spies there. No doubt a person with the ability to write fiction of this kind will find Kalimpong an interesting place for some novel of that type (Nehru 1959, 18–19).

Political intrigues, gossip, and accusations about espionage circulated in Kalimpong, and were related in books written by Western visitors to Kalimpong—some of whom did indeed report back to foreign agencies about their neighbours and friends (Nebesky-Wojkowitz 1956b; Patterson 1990; Sangharakshita 1997). It became infamous as a “nest of spies” (Patterson 1960, 71), a place with a highly volatile atmosphere in which suspicion and mistrust were widespread and had concrete consequences. Newly arrived residents and visitors were often seen as potential threats because of their possible ulterior motives for being in town. This atmosphere of suspicion engulfed Prince Peter as well as his wife Irina and his close friend Georg Nikolaivitch Roerich who, as Russian nationals, were both suspected of being Communist stooges. Another friend, Gyalo Thondup, the Dalai Lama’s elder brother, was suspected of being an agent of the Chinese Nationalists (Patterson 1990, 137). He later helped the American Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) work with a Tibetan émigré group gathering in Kalimpong to spearhead the Tibetan resistance and an anti-China campaign, creating a resistance network and planning a long-term guerrilla war (Shakya 1999; Knaus 1999; 2012).⁶ Kalimpong had become an important gathering

6 In his own memoir, Gyalo Thondup branded himself “the noodle-maker of Kalimpong” (2015).

place for Tibetan resistance directed towards Communist China, as well as a place of refuge for Tibetans fleeing Chinese expansion in Tibet as the PLA further advanced into Tibet and threatened India at its borders.

Kalimpong grew to be so important that for many Tibetans it became synonymous with all of India. For others, it was a Tibetan place (figure 4). According to Prince Peter, the town had a large ex-pat community of 3,500 Tibetan residents, including nobility, traders, and Tibetan Christians (Prince Peter 1963, 582). It also housed the famous Tibetan-language newspaper, the *Tibet Mirror* (*yul phyogs so so'i gsar 'gyur gyi me long*), which Dorje Tharchin had been publishing since 1925, and which circulated among the



Figure 4: Gopal Studio in Kalimpong published many photographs from the Fourteenth Dalai Lama's Kalimpong reception in 1956, and Prince Peter collected several of these. This picture captures contact zone encounters within a single frame.

elite in Tibet for almost forty years (Hackett ND; McGranahan 2010, 69ff). Being a Tibetan place also meant that European and American Tibetologists, anthropologists, political officers, trade officers, and explorers stayed in Kalimpong, either as a necessary stopover before proceeding to Tibet or as a replacement for a stay in Tibet. Famous Tibetophiles like Alexandra David-Néel, Georg Nikolaivitch Roerich, and René de Nebesky-Wojkowitz went there. Some rented or bought homes and settled in Kalimpong. Others stayed at the Himalayan Hotel, from which important information, gossip, and misinformation about Tibet was circulated (Nebesky-Wojkowitz 1956b; Sangharakshita 1997).

Thus, at the height of the Cold War, an increasing number of visitors came to Kalimpong because it was the second-best thing to being in Tibet

proper. Scottish missionary George Patterson remarked that numerous unidentifiable, questionable individuals came to Kalimpong at the height of the tension, when Kalimpong was “the most strategic town on the Chinese Communist route to Calcutta, and became a Communist constituency at this most critical period of Indo-Tibetan crisis” (Patterson 1990, 132). He observed how newspaper fantasies were fabricated because reporters, barred by obstructive Tibetan officials, were unable to enter Tibet. Instead they sought their information among Tibetan travelers in Kalimpong’s bazaars and among the foreigners who gathered at the Himalayan Hotel. They wired home reports about Tibet, which were partly from people’s imaginations and partly products of the Kalimpong rumor mill. Patterson called it “imaginative reporting.” Patterson himself reported to a foreign power, not in order to support any anti-Communist movement, but out of his “pro-God and pro-Tibet” convictions (Patterson 1960; 1990, 124).

The tense political situation produced severe obstacles, forcing Prince Peter to give up his original research design. He had arrived in Kalimpong in January 1950 and met the remnants of the first team of the Third Danish Expedition to Central Asia; the prince was a member of the second team. He intended to stay in Kalimpong primarily to arrange a permit for the expedition to enter Tibet. However, his repeated requests for a travel permit were looked upon with suspicion, since he and his expedition members were seen “as intruders with possibly suspicious ulterior motives” (Prince Peter 1963, 581). He abandoned the original goal of traversing the Tibetan plateau to reach Alaša in Inner Mongolia and the territory of the “Yellow Uigurs” (Prince Peter 1954, 229), and instead found what he believed to be a more pragmatic solution, namely crossing the Indo-Tibetan border and following the traditional trade route to its northern terminus in Gyantse. According to Prince Peter’s account, neither the Political Officer in Sikkim nor “the Tibetans” wanted to take responsibility for Prince Peter’s scientific expedition, each of them responding to his request by referring him to the other (Prince Peter 1953b, 8–9).⁷ Prince Peter lamented that “in truly Oriental manner, they abstained from being either affirmative or negative” (Prince Peter 1963, 582) until August, when he was told to “kindly postpone my voyage” (Prince Peter 1954, 231).

When the PLA invaded eastern Tibet in October 1950, the Fourteenth Dalai Lama, faced with the threat that the PLA would proceed to Lhasa, moved in December to Dromo, a small town near the Indo-Tibetan border (Shakya 1999, 51). In a last effort to obtain permission to enter Tibet, Prince Peter flexed his royal connections and got his cousin, King Paul of Greece, to provide him with a greeting that he could present to the Dalai Lama (Prince Peter 1953b, 10; 1954, 232). Prince Peter was not allowed, however, to present the introductory letter and the Greek king’s photograph to the Dalai

7 When Prince Peter writes “the Tibetans” in his account, he probably means the Tibetan Foreign Bureau in Lhasa and his contact Tsepon Shakabpa, who was the highest-ranking Tibetan official in Kalimpong.

Lama. These had the opposite effect on the Tibetans who—perhaps fearing a potential Chinese reaction—sealed Prince Peter's fate, for he now found himself permanently stranded in Kalimpong, unable to enter Tibet: "We thus lost a last opportunity to visit the land before the Chinese military occupation in December of the same year" (Prince Peter 1952, 283). The final incorporation of Tibet into the People's Republic of China (PRC) the following year, and the Chinese military presence all along the Indian border from Kashmir to Assam heightened tensions in the region: "it makes everyone on the border feel jittery, and, as usual, scientists are suspected of having deeper motives for being in those regions than is in fact the case" (Prince Peter 1953b, 10). Prince Peter's expedition was thus forced to come to an end in Kalimpong, and he summed up his experience of the situation succinctly:

[I] have come to learn that international politics are the real obstacle to scientific research in these areas. The height of the Himalayan Barrier, the barrenness of the Tibetan high plateau, and the difficulties of supply and transport pale into insignificance when compared with this, the main impediment (Prince Peter 1954, 232).

Kalimpong as an interpersonal contact zone

Kalimpong was a cosmopolitan borderland *en route* to Tibet, Prince Peter's ultimate destination which had been rendered unachievable by the PLA's progression into Tibet. Instead, Kalimpong became a figurative route into Tibet for him: The many Tibetans pouring into town, along with the already existing community of Tibetan residents, became a huge potential pool of interlocutors. In addition, Kalimpong was a favourite seasonal refuge for Tibetans fleeing the cold Tibetan winters—a "Riviera for Tibet" (Prince Peter 1953a, 6). According to Prince Peter, the annual Tibetan traffic to or through Kalimpong amounted to as many as 15,000 Tibetans (Prince Peter 1953b, 9). He was thus able to get direct access to many Tibetans who otherwise would be unapproachable or difficult to meet during travels in Tibet proper. Moreover, the Dalai Lama and his government's relocation to Dromo in December 1950 caused panic among Tibetan elites and prompted many of them to flee Tibet and move to Kalimpong (Harner 1954; Shakya 1999, 51). This multiplied Prince Peter's pool of potential interlocutors greatly: "a wave of Tibetan temporary refugees to Kalimpong, people generally of means, who decided to weather the storm on the Indian side of the frontier and see which way events would develop" (Prince Peter 1963, 582). It also increased Prince Peter's pool of potential artefacts because the ruling elite who sent their families and their valuables across the border into safety were later willing to sell their belongings to him (Prince Peter 1953a, 10–11).

Tibetans arrived in large numbers in Kalimpong, where they bought or rented property to such an extent that the Development Area in

Kalimpong “looked like a suburb of Lhasa” (Patterson 1990, 104). Tibetan officials and their families, Tibetan traders and pilgrims, as well as the few European residents of Tibet all fled to Kalimpong (figure 5). The Dalai Lama’s mother arrived there with his six siblings, and Prince Peter befriended the elder brother of the Dalai Lama, Gyalo Thondup (Knaus 2012, 309 n.18). The famous Austrian mountaineer Heinrich Harrer came to Kalimpong after seven years in Tibet (Harrer 1954), as did the White Russian engineer Niedbylov, the English radio operator Reginald Fox, a Torgut Mongol prince with his family and retinue, twenty-three Russian Old Believers, and a steady “stream of refugees” (Prince Peter 1954, 232). They came to a cosmopolitan Kalimpong that included residents like the exiled prince and princess of the fallen Burmese royal family and the sister of the Sikkimese king, Chuni Wangmo, who was married to a Bhutanese prince (Shah 2012).

Prince Peter dealt with both destitute travellers and representatives of the Tibetan upper class, who met the prince as fellow aristocrats. His close friend Georg Nikolaivitch Roerich, a Tibet scholar and son of the Russian painter Nicholas Roerich, was instrumental in arranging meetings with prominent Tibetans, found good language teachers for Prince Peter so he could learn Tibetan, and helped him obtain ethnographical artefacts and books for his collection. Tibet scholar René de Nebesky-Wojkowitz was likewise Prince Peter’s close ally in the field, dedicating his monumental work *Oracles and Demons of Tibet* (1956a) to Prince Peter. Another traveller visiting Kalimpong at the time, James Cameron, wrote in his autobiography that the odd and endearing Kalimpong “had become a rendezvous for what was probably the most impressive collection of human eccentrics in Asia.” The people whom he met at the Himalayan Hotel were almost surrealist: “wizards and sorcerers, Tibetan aristocrats, angry exiles from China, remote sprigs from the forgotten European nobility, Indian yogi, Bhutani politicians, professional anthropologists, linguists, students, pilgrims, miracle-workers and innocent bystanders, all milling around with curious axes to grind and trying either to get into Tibet, or to get out” (Cameron 1967, 204–205). *Time* reported on December 4, 1950:

Tibet is only 30 miles away. For that reason, Kalimpong has collected over the years a number of mystical characters who arrived via Jelep-la pass from Tibet, and another bunch who would give their last rupee to travel the other way. Foreign cultists, scholars, artists, adventurers and missionaries plod Kalimpong’s streets, panting to explore Tibet and its particular brand of Buddhism, but lacking permission to get in. [...] Last year anthropologist Prince Peter of Greece and Denmark breezed into Kalimpong with his wife to study a unique form of Tibetan polyandry called za-sum-pa, the sharing of wives between fathers and sons, and (occasionally) between uncles and nephews. Tibet would not admit the prince and princess (*Time* 1950).



Figure 5: Picture given to Prince Peter by Heinrich Harrer in Kalimpong, showing Tibetan official with child.

Despite his failure to enter Tibet, Prince Peter was nonetheless thrilled about the opportunities that Kalimpong offered. In 1954, he reported to the Royal Asiatic Society:

All this made the place we had perforce settled in a most interesting and lively one. [...] Apart from the excitement of meeting all these strange and fascinating people, there were enormous possibilities of work. Very soon we had got down to interviewing them, purchasing clothes and valuables from them which we dispatched to the National Museum in Copenhagen and, after the Indian Government has made registration of all Tibetans with the police compulsory, measuring and describing them in order the better to find out what their physical racial characteristics were. We had been denied entry into Tibet, but Tibet had come to us, and under circumstances of stress which made it perhaps easier for us to obtain the results we wanted than if we had been working in the country under settled conditions (Prince Peter 1954, 231–2).

In terms of doing research, what had initially seemed like a disaster because of the expedition's failure to enter Tibet, soon proved to grant unparalleled access to Tibetans from all walks of life and all regions of the country. This diversity is illustrated by the datasheets of the 5,000 individuals who came to Kalimpong from Tibet who Prince Peter measured anthropometrically. Of the 5,000 surveyed, 4,924 were Tibetans—4,411 males and 513 females, perhaps reflecting the gender composition of the general Tibetan refugee and trader population in Kalimpong, as opposed to that of the more settled Tibetan population. The people he measured came from all three Tibetan regions (Tib.: *chol kha gsum*), Utsang, Kham, and Amdo (figure 6). Prince Peter categorized his material according to these three indigenous categories, which in his view constituted Tibet, that is: taken together the three cohorts represented Tibet.⁸

Prince Peter settled in Kalimpong with his wife and, building on his productive professional relations, he started to establish equally productive interpersonal relations within Kalimpong society. Initially, the couple rented the house Tashiding from Jigme Palden Dorji, Bhutan's future first Prime Minister, but later they bought the house Krishnalok. Both houses were situated in Ringkingpong, literally and metaphorically high above the rest of the town because Kalimpong is located along a ridge stretching from one mountain top, Ringkingpong, to the other mountain top, Deolo. Here, they lived in relative wealth and abundance compared to the rest of Kalimpong's residents. According to Patterson, Kalimpong was at the time divided into five areas: firstly, the Development Area in Ringkingpong occupied by European residents and Tibetan elites who lived in European-style

8 For more details on Prince Peter's anthropometric studies, see Brox and Koktvedgaard Zeitzen 2017.



Figure 6: One of the portraits accompanying the thousands of anthropometric measurements that Prince Peter collected in Kalimpong.

houses with gardens, an area which had been developed during the end of the colonial period and was physically elevated above the rest of the town; secondly, the Deolo hills to the north with Dr. Graham's Homes for Anglo-Indian children; thirdly, the Eleventh Mile with Tibetan caravanserais; fourthly, the bazaar where townspeople conducted local trade; and finally the Tenth Mile, with its busy Tibetan and Chinese commercial area and international trade, the red light district, and the Topkhana (shelter for the destitute) where most Tibetans lived (Patterson 1960, 72, cf. Nebesky-Wojkowitz 1956b, 75).

However, the good times—both professionally and personally—did not last. For several years Kalimpong was a strategic site where Prince Peter could conveniently collect Tibetan artefacts, accounts, and anthropometrical data, and he worked tirelessly at maintaining his social and scientific relations in order to secure the expedition's success, despite its failure to enter Tibet. In his reports back to his Danish sponsors, he regularly complained about the difficult circumstances under which he was working, which included the regular rejection of his applications to enter the Sikkimese and Nepalese Himalayas. Further difficulties arose as Prince Peter became increasingly estranged from some of the Tibetan contacts and friendships that he had built in Kalimpong since arriving there in 1950 (Prince Peter 1954, 233). From his correspondence with Indian and Tibetan contacts and authorities it is also clear that there was

little support for his scientific work in Kalimpong. The Indian government and the West Bengali authorities grew increasingly concerned about his activities because of his royal biography, their speculations about the true motives behind his expedition, and suspicions that his Russian wife was a spy; talks and interviews that he gave, in which he spoke out against the government of the PRC and Nehru's passive stance on Tibet, also raised their concern. According to Prince Peter, the Indian authorities were trying, under pressure from the Chinese, to halt his work and obstruct his contact with Tibetans (Prince Peter and 1966, 8). A rumour spread by the Communist press in India did not help his case. This rumour claimed that Prince Peter was not measuring Tibetans to gain anthropometrical statistics about Tibetans, but to further a political agenda: to turn them into imperialist agents operating in Tibet with the aim of creating "a new Hungary" (Prince Peter 1966, 8).

Prince Peter felt that the Indian press and the Indian government were harassing him. The perceived harassment culminated in 1956 when Prince Peter and Irina's residency permits were withdrawn and they were evicted from their home, Krishnalok. According to Prince Peter, the Chinese Prime Minister Zhou Enlai was directly responsible for the eviction. After being granted a few months' reprieve to allow Irina to recuperate from a severe bout of pneumonia, Prince Peter and Irina finally left Kalimpong in February 1957, never to return.

Kalimpong as an ethnographic contact zone

Ethnographic challenges were soon to add to the geopolitical and interpersonal challenges Prince Peter faced in Kalimpong. The longer he remained in Kalimpong, the clearer it became that he would have to abandon the expedition mode in favour of localised ethnographic studies. Prince Peter's journey thus mirrored the trajectory that had led his mentor Bronislaw Malinowski to pioneer ethnographic fieldwork as an anthropological method. As a Polish national, Malinowski was initially stranded in the Trobriand Islands due to the outbreak of the First World War. He wrote in his diary: "September 1st began a new epoch in my life: an expedition all on my own to the tropics" (Malinowski 1989 [1967], 3). Malinowski spent several years on the islands, learning the local language and pioneering participant observation. Similarly, Prince Peter was stranded in Kalimpong for seven years, never able to enter Tibet, but acquired a deep local knowledge and a command of Tibetan in order to talk to his interlocutors. Prince Peter was not immobilized but instead "stranded" in Kalimpong in the sense that the expedition was unable to proceed into Tibet as planned. During their seven years there, Prince Peter and Irina did go on vacations and other expeditions, as well as back to Denmark in October 1952, to exhibit the artefacts that Prince Peter had collected in Kalimpong at the Danish National Museum (figure 7). They also conducted a lecture tour



Figure 7: Prince Peter (with Halfdan Siiger) at the National Museum in 1952, where some of the Tibetan artefacts that he collected were exhibited; he is getting ready for a presentation to the press.

showcasing his films about Kalimpong's "indigenous peoples and wonderful landscapes" (Prince Peter 1953a, 12).

Prince Peter's unplanned and unanticipated long stay in Kalimpong not only forced him to abandon the mobile expedition approach to ethnographic collecting, it also significantly foreshadowed contemporary anthropological fieldwork approaches, in which ethnographers work with people where they are when the fieldwork is being conducted, rather than where they are considered to originally belong (Malkki 1992). Yet Prince Peter wanted to document the customs of Tibetans as "originally" practiced in Tibet: "It was, of course, not the same as studying the people in their own, national environment, but it was the closest I could get, and not unsatisfactory at that" (Prince Peter 1963, 582).

One of the objects of the Third Danish Expedition to Central Asia was indeed to explore *terra incognita* and rescue the remnants of local cultures perceived to be under threat from the encroaching, modernizing world. That is, Prince Peter intended to and did in fact engage in rescue anthropology, documenting still extant traditional cultures to preserve records of these for future generations. As part of the Tibetan rescue efforts, Prince Peter resumed his ethnographic research on polyandry—a marriage form in which one woman is married to several men—which had been interrupted by the Second World War (Prince Peter 1954, 232). Tibet was at the time, and still is, home to the largest polyandrous communities in the world. Tibetans typically practice fraternal polyandry where brothers or classificatory brothers become husbands to a common wife. Other forms include the polyandry of fathers and sons who have a wife in common, a unique phenomenon not found anywhere else in the world. Prince Peter was fascinated by the fact that every form of marriage appeared to be permissible in Tibet—polyandry, polygyny, monogamy, group marriage, as well as combinations of these, often within the same family—reflecting the cultural diversity of the area (Koktvedgaard Zeitzen 2008; Prince Peter 1963). It gave him an even greater impetus to explore and salvage manifestations of this cultural diversity.

Prince Peter's interest in polyandry and his desire to "rescue" it for posterity might have been fuelled by the widespread notion in (and outside) the West that modernity would make the "traditional" practices of polygamy disappear (Koktvedgaard Zeitzen 2008). Prince Peter even went so far as to call polyandry a "recessive cultural trait," arguing that polyandry was fragile because it was a product of very special economic and social circumstances and could easily be destroyed when societies in which it was practiced came in contact with non-polyandrous societies (Prince Peter 1963, 570). From this perspective, polyandrous Tibetans exposed to monogamous peoples were seen as in danger of abandoning or being forced to abandon their age-old marriage customs (figure 8).

However, Prince Peter's anthropological rescue paradigm was not based solely on concerns about particular Tibetan customs. Rather, it



Figure 8: Tibetan polyandrous extended family, photographed by Prince Peter in Kalimpong, 1956. Tibetan polyandrous marriages, where a woman is married to several men, can be combined with polygynous marriages, where a man is married to several women.

was grounded in long-held assumptions about cultural decay. For centuries, many people in the West have assumed that peoples in non-Western societies would end up becoming just like them with the onslaught of modernity, that traditional indigenous cultures would collapse in unequal struggles with superior Western culture and global capitalism. Anthropologists have challenged but also perpetuated such pervasive ideas about cultural decay.⁹ Marshall Sahlins (1999; 2005) argues that anthropologists have always suffered from a certain type of cultural nostalgia, seeking out pure indigenous Others, untouched by the corrupt, capitalist West. He asserts that anthropologists often assume that these Others must necessarily face cultural decay or even cultural death through contact with the West—a contact which, ironically, often was initiated by the anthropologist himself. The problem with this mindset is, according to Sahlins, that anthropologists are no longer studying what they find in the field, but rather are addressing it through the prism of an ideologically inspired project about “rescuing” indigenous peoples and their cultures from (and for) the West. Thus, contemporary anthropologists have not come much farther than their founding fathers over one hundred years ago, when Franz Boas and Bronislaw Malinowski saw it as their duty to rescue what they could of old traditional cultures heading toward extinction. Sahlins goes as far as to call this missionary work.

9 See Thomas 1991; 1994.

Prince Peter's essentialised vision of a spatially anchored Tibet, and the urge to keep it in temporal and developmental stasis, clashes with contemporary anthropological views of cultures as dynamic and fluid. There is no cultural core as such to be rescued, as cultures develop continuously and can never be catalogued in their entirety (Hastrup 2004). Sahlins' critique can indeed be levelled at Prince Peter and his research in Kalimpong. Prince Peter was a student of Malinowski and had been schooled in rescue anthropology as a paradigm, and he himself saw his expedition as a rescue mission.¹⁰ His journey into and sojourn in Kalimpong thus, in various ways, embodies the West's meeting with the non-West.

In anthropology, the postmodern and postcolonial critique has helped focus scholarly attention on assumptions about other peoples that underlie the discipline and its theories. Discourse has become a prism through which to understand ethnographic narratives, how they are shaped by the ethnographers' subjective selves in their interactions with their interlocutors, their field sites, their conventions for cultural narrative (Abu-Lughod 1991; 1993). It suggests that we may approach Prince Peter's ethnographic accounts about polyandrous Tibetans as narratives representing his subjective stories about how polyandry may have been practiced in Tibet. He constantly had to negotiate access to and rely on the narratives of Tibetans who had settled or were displaced in Kalimpong. Prince Peter neither explored nor reflected on the representativeness of their accounts, just as there is little reflection in his accounts on the effect of displacement on his interlocutors' narratives. One might argue, however, that his interlocutors' narratives are just that, narratives, and they would not necessarily be more authentic or accurate if delivered in the interlocutors' self-professed point of origin, or less so if delivered in another place.¹¹

We may thus gain new insights into Prince Peter's ethnographic accounts by understanding his interactions with his interlocutors and collaborators in Kalimpong as taking place within a contact zone. Contact zones are, from Pratt's perspective, spaces shaped by European expeditions into non-European worlds, yet they are also transformative spaces, where differences in power relations between ethnographer and interlocutors could be overcome and new relations could be negotiated (Pratt 1992). Looking at the conflictual social and political climate in the 1950s Kalimpong contact zone, where both Prince Peter and his Tibetan interlocutors were embroiled in personal struggles of different kinds, we may question the extent of the reciprocity: Prince Peter had to rely on his interlocutors' bodies of knowledge in order to understand how they looked at and made sense of their polyandrous world. Yet he filters their stories through the cultural assumptions regarding polyandry that formed part of his own acquired anthropological narratives. And from this filter he had to extract those elements which he thought embodied the original Tibetan polyandrous customs practiced in a

10 See for instance Prince Peter 1952; 1953a–b; 1954; 1966.

11 See Fergusson & Gupta 1997; Marcus 1995.

different time and place. He did not address the questions about the many ways in which his interlocutors' words might relate to their actual worlds, the ones in Kalimpong in which they were living or were displaced. His primary purpose was not to understand what was happening in Kalimpong during his sojourn there, but rather to rescue what had been practiced and situated in Tibet proper and was about to disappear. In Sahlins's words (Sahlins 1999), it was missionary work.

Prince Peter, a classic old world-ethnographer and explorer, complete with a colonial lifestyle and an expeditionary approach to the field, epitomized the quintessential, privileged European traveller in foreign, unexplored, and exotic parts of the world. His expedition and ethnographic work thus becomes more than an actual exploration of empty spaces, it involves travel as imaginary constructions of other peoples and places (C. Harris 2012). Expedition writing as a form of travel writing is, as Pratt suggests, shaped by certain narrative contexts and conventions, where factual accounts may be mixed with more speculative representations of otherness and other peoples based on the writer's own cultural or academic assumptions (Pratt 1992). The prince's exploration of polyandry in Kalimpong could thus, from Pratt's perspective, be understood as a Eurocentric exploration of an exotic marriage system, which in turn reinforced European cultural assumptions about a particular kind of marriage as normal and natural.

Upon leaving Kalimpong, Prince Peter travelled extensively in Europe and the US giving leisure talks about exotic Tibetan customs at explorers' clubs. At the Royal Central Asian Society in London, he was introduced by its chairman, Lord Birdwood, as an anthropologist—a discipline that Birdwood understood as "concerned with bones, stones and queer stories about savages."¹² Prince Peter did not just relate queer stories about savages, however, he also delivered political messages about a people that he had come to cherish and wanted to help. Perhaps this was Eurocentric, but it was driven by a humanistic and genuine interest in and empathy for Tibet and the plight of its peoples and cultures under Communist Chinese rule.

Concluding remarks on Prince Peter in Kalimpong

Prince Peter's work in Kalimpong in the 1950s took place in a particularly complex contact zone in which he had to negotiate difficult personal, political, and professional circumstances in his encounters and exchanges with the great variety of ethnic, religious, and linguistic groups moving in and out of the town. Yet it was also a very productive contact zone, where he was able to assemble vast amounts of material and immaterial data through his prolonged and intense interactions with local interlocutors. As the town developed into an important ethnographic contact zone through the arrival of thousands of displaced Tibetans fleeing the Chinese advances

12 The lecture was given on February 25, 1959 (Prince Peter 1959, 251).

into Tibet, his seven years in Kalimpong turned out to be the most productive phase in Prince Peter's professional life. Here he was able to pursue his expedition's aims of documenting and rescuing Tibetan culture, albeit in a stationary mode—Tibet came to him rather than him going to Tibet.

Prince Peter had the financial means to pursue his research interests on his own personal and professional terms. Yet in Kalimpong, he had to navigate this complex contact zone carefully in order to obtain permission to work there and to meet interlocutors and collaborators from whom he could collect accounts and artefacts so as to document immaterial and material Tibetan culture. As a contested contact zone, Kalimpong also constituted a transformative space where differences in power relations between Prince Peter, as ethnographer, and his Tibetan interlocutors and local collaborators could be overcome and new relations negotiated. In order to disentangle the networks of knowledge that emerge from Prince Peter's many encounters and exchanges as he engaged with a great variety of differently placed peoples, we subdivided the multi-layered contact zone into three different sub-zones, which we have labelled the geopolitical, the interpersonal, and the ethnographic contact zones. In those sub-zones, Prince Peter's encounters and exchanges cannot necessarily be understood as the archetypal Western penetration of social spaces and cultural places previously inhabited by the non-Western Other. That is, they were not necessarily encounters between the superior civilizer from the centre and the inferior indigene on the periphery. Prince Peter did not have the upper hand in every encounter, despite being male, white, wealthy, and royal. Like everyone else navigating this complex contact zone, Prince Peter had to assume different positions at different times, and he often struggled personally and professionally to get access to and work with potential interlocutors and collaborators.

Prince Peter's encounters and exchanges with Tibetan and Indian authorities were particularly complex, as Kalimpong developed into a Tibetan place and a significant ethnographic contact zone for him, whereas the authorities often considered it a nest of spies. In Kalimpong, Prince Peter's scientific pursuits became entangled with the political drama and the social tragedy resulting from the PLA presence in Tibet. The town became a transformative space for him, as it further developed into a conflictual *geo-political* contact zone as well as a challenging *inter-personal* contact zone for the prince and his wife. Stranded in Kalimpong, Prince Peter attempted to combine his two reasons for being in the region, namely to lead the Third Danish Expedition to Central Asia in order to rescue the remnants of local cultures, and to continue his fieldwork and research on polyandry. However, the prince wanted to collect and document Tibetan heritage as it was practiced in the place where he believed it originally belonged, anchored in place in Tibet. He was less interested in understanding contemporary Tibetan lifeways in Kalimpong, and seems not to have reflected on the representativeness of his Tibetan accounts, collected outside of Tibet, or the effect of displacement on those accounts.

Prince Peter's unreflective approach is in line with Pratt's assertion that the whole idea of discovery and exploration in such projects as the Third Danish Expedition to Central Asia was fundamentally Eurocentric, since what Europeans discovered was always already known by local peoples. Yet discoveries were ascribed to the European travellers as if what they had discovered had not existed beforehand (Pratt 1992). Prince Peter's exploration of polyandry in Kalimpong might possibly be viewed as one such Eurocentric exploration, seeking to map out an exotic marriage system at odds with European notions of propriety and morality. Through his ethnographic account, polyandry was presented as a rare and divergent marriage form, the ultimate exotic custom to be rescued from oblivion. As a scientific explorer and expedition leader, Prince Peter could relate and display exotic customs like polyandry in non-threatening ways on the basis of the perceived good intentions of his endeavours. Accounts of polyandry could tantalize but not threaten curious Europeans because these accounts were taken out of their context and inserted into a new context, the ethnographic account, where Europeans could ascribe meaning to them. Yet they were also literally out of context, based on accounts from displaced peoples in a contested contact zone.

Our preliminary exploration of Prince Peter's ethnographic research therefore raises a number of questions about his work with his Tibetan interlocutors in Kalimpong. We view the cultural accounts collected by Prince Peter, whether they are of Tibetan polyandrous family structures or oracle trances, as produced in the cultural encounters and exchanges with interlocutors that took place in the transformative spaces within the geopolitical, interpersonal, and ethnographic contact zones. His interlocutors emerge as co-producers of his ethnographic knowledge and accounts, which leads us to ask how Prince Peter's representations of Tibetan Others were shaped by these Others, and how these Tibetan Others' representations of themselves and their polyandry were shaped by the way they represented themselves to a European explorer like Prince Peter.

Pratt links such queries to the notion of transculturation, a contact zone phenomenon referring to the dynamic, mutual influences on forms of representation and cultural practices flowing between colony and metropolis, or periphery and centre (Pratt 1992). Transculturation was first used as a corrective to notions of acculturation or deculturation. These notions describe the transfer of culture from metropolitan centres to peripheral colonies, which is often assumed to result in the destruction of local cultures—and the emergence of rescue anthropology (Sahlins 1999; 2005). In contemporary ethnography, transculturation may be used to understand how marginal groups choose, invent, or incorporate elements based on materials and resources transmitted to them from dominant groups.¹³ Whether Prince Peter's work in Kalimpong can be interpreted in the light of transculturation in a contact zone or, as he assumed, in terms of decul-

13 See Thomas 1991; 1994; 2000.

uration, is an interesting question that we intend to explore further.¹⁴ Here it suffices to say that his ground-breaking study of polyandry helped produce and maintain European perceptions about themselves and their world by opening vistas into unknown and uncharted marital forms and sexualities. As all good travel writing does, it helped shape a European sense of difference from exotic non-Western cultures, which were to be explored, described, and mapped. Prince Peter's research was not merely advanced travel writing, however. He left behind rich collections of ethnographic accounts and artefacts, and a legacy of intrepid exploration and a tenacious will to learn.

Figures

Fig. 1–8: Ethnographic Collection, National Museum.

References

- Abu-Lughod, Lila. 1991. "Writing against Culture." In *Recapturing Anthropology: Working in the Present*, edited by Richard Fox, 137–62. Santa Fe: School of American Research.
- . 1993. *Writing Women's Worlds: Bedouin Stories*. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- Agelopoulos, Georgios. 2013. "Multiple Encounters: Attempts to Introduce Anthropology in Greece during the 1940s—1960s." In *The Anthropological Field on the Margins of Europe, 1945–1991*, edited by Aleksandar Bošković and Chris Hann, 65–84. Zurich: Lit Verlag.
- Bishop, Peter. 1989. *The Myth of Shangri-La: Tibet, Travel Writing and the Western Creation of Sacred Landscape*. London: Athlone Press.
- Bonaparte, H. H. Prince Roland. 1886. *Note on the Lapps of Finmark, Roland Bonaparte*. Paris: Printed by George Chamerot for private circulation only.
- Brox, Trine and Miriam Koktvedgaard Zeitzen. 2016. "Prins Peter, tibetanerne og videnskaben," *Tibet*, vol. 32 (87) Copenhagen: DSTK: 9–16.
- . 2017. "When Tibet came to Prince Peter: Tibetan-Danish Relations through a Stationary Expedition in the 1950ies," *The Tibet Journal* XLII (2): 13–35.
- Cameron, James. 1967. *Point of Departure: An Attempt at Autobiography*. New York: McGraw-Hill.

14 In our research project *Prince Peter and the Third Danish Expedition to Central Asia*, we have focused on Prince Peter's ethnographic knowledge production during the seven years he spent in Kalimpong. The objective of the project is to do an *ethnography of collecting* in the Tibetan works, words, and worlds of Prince Peter in order to trace the biographies of both him and his Tibetan interlocutors, as well as the biographies of the Tibetan artefacts, accounts, and anthropometrical data he collected in order to advance our understanding of cultural heritage in the Himalayas. See also Koktvedgaard Zeitzen and Brox (2016).

- Ferguson, James, and Akhil Gupta, ed. 1997. *Culture, Power, Place: Explorations in Critical Anthropology*. Durham: Duke University Press.
- Hackett, Paul G. ND. "Kalimpong, Gergan Dorje Tharchin, and his Mirror Newspaper." (http://library.columbia.edu/content/dam/libraryweb/locations/east_asian/Mirror_Hackett.pdf; retrieved Jul. 31, 2014).
- Harrer, Heinrich. 1954. *Syv År i Tibet*. Copenhagen: Schönberg.
- Harris, Clare E. 2012. *The Museum on the Roof of the World*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Harris, Tina. 2008. "Silk Roads and Wool Routes: Contemporary Geographies of Trade between Lhasa and Kalimpong." *India Review* 7 (3): 200–222.
- . 2013. *Geographical Diversions: Tibetan Trade, Global Transactions*. Athens: University of Georgia Press.
- Hastrup, Kirsten. 2004. *Kultur. Det Fleksible Fællesskab*. Aarhus: Univers.
- Hopkirk, Peter. 1982. *Trespassers on the Roof of the World: The Race for Lhasa*. London: John Murray.
- . 1990. *The Great Game: On Secret Service in High Asia*. London: John Murray.
- Knaus, John Kenneth. 1999. *Orphans of the Cold War: America and the Tibetan Struggle for Survival*. New York: Public Affairs.
- . 2012. *Beyond Shangri-La, America and Tibet's Move into the Twenty-first Century*. Durham: Duke University Press.
- Koktvedgaard Zeitzen, Miriam. 2008. *Polygamy: A Cross Cultural Analysis*. Oxford: Berg Publishers.
- Koktvedgaard Zeitzen, Miriam and Trine Brox. 2016. "Strandet i Kalimpong: Prins Peters Tibet-ekspedition 1950–1957." *Nationalmuseets Arbejdsmark* 2016: 52–65.
- Malinowski, Bronislaw. 1989 [1967]. *A Diary in the Strict Sense of the Term*. Stanford: Stanford University Press.
- Malkki, Liisa. 1992. "National Geographic: The Rooting of Peoples and the Territorialization of National Identity among Scholars and Refugees." *Cultural Anthropology* 7 (1): 24–44.
- McGranahan, Carole. 2010. *Arrested Histories: Tibet, the CIA, and Memories of a Forgotten War*. Durham: Duke University Press.
- Nebesky-Wojkowitz, René de. 1956a. *Oracles and Demons of Tibet: The Cult and Iconography of the Tibetan Protective Deities*. The Hague: Mouton.
- . 1956b. *Where the Gods are Mountains: Three Years among the People of the Himalayas*. London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson.
- Nehru, Jawaharlal. 1959. "Prime Minister's Statement in the Lok Sabha on 23 March 1959." (http://www.claudearpi.net/maintenance/uploaded_pics/1959LS_Statement_March.pdf; retrieved Jan. 22, 2015).
- Patterson, George N. 1960. *Tibet in Revolt*. London: Faber and Faber.
- . 1990. *Requiem for Tibet*. London: Aurum Press.
- Pratt, Mary Louise. 1992. *Imperial Eyes: Travel Writing and Transculturation*. New York: Routledge.
- Prince Peter of Greece and Denmark. 1952. "An Appeal for the Anthropological and Ethnological Exploration of Tibet." *Congrès International des Sciences Anthropologiques et Ethnologiques*. Vienna (Vol. 3): 281–284.

- . 1953a. "Kalimpong som etnografisk arbejdsmark ved Tibet." *Nationalmuseets Arbejdsmark*: 1–13.
- . 1953b. "The Third Danish Expedition to Central Asia 1948-53: The Work of the Second Team on the Tibet Border." *Journal of the Royal Central Asian Society* XL (part I): 7–10.
- . 1954. "The Third Danish Expedition to Central Asia: Its Work in the Himalayas." *Journal of the Royal Central Asian Society* XLI (parts III–IV): 228–237.
- . 1959. "Anthropological Research in Ceylon, India, and on the Borders of Tibet." *Journal of the Royal Central Asian Society* 46: 251–263.
- . 1963. *A Study of Polyandry*. The Hague: Mouton & Co.
- Prince Peter of Greece and Denmark and Jørgen Balslev Jørgensen. 1966. "Physical Anthropological Observations on 5000 Tibetans: from the 3rd Danish Expedition to Central Asia" In *Anthropological Researches from the 3rd Danish Expedition to Central Asia*, edited by H.R.H. Prince Peter of Greece and Denmark, L. Edelberg, J. Balslev Jørgensen, K. Paludan, and H. Siiger, 1-46. København: Munksgaard.
- Sahlins, Marshall. 1999. "Two or Three Things I Know about Culture." *Journal of The Royal Anthropological Institute* 5 (3): 399–422.
- . 2005. *Culture in Practice. Selected Essays*. New York: Zone Books.
- Sangharakshita. 1997. *The Rainbow Road: From Tooting Broadway to Kalimpong, Memoirs of an English Buddhist*. Cambridge: Windhorse Publications.
- Shah, Sudha. 2012. *The King in Exile: The Fall of the Royal Family of Burma*. Harper-Collins Publishers India.
- Shakya, Tsering. 1999. *The Dragon in the Land of Snows: A History of Modern Tibet*. New York: Columbia University Press.
- Thomas, Nicholas. 1991. *Entangled Objects: Exchange, Material Culture and Colonialism in the Pacific*. Harvard: Harvard University Press.
- . 1994. *Colonialism's Culture: Anthropology, Travel and Government*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.
- . 2000. "Epilogue." In *Hunting the Gatherers: Ethnographic Collectors, Agents and Agency in Melanesia, 1870s-1930s*, edited by O'Hanlon, Michael, and Robert L. Welsch, 273–277. New York: Berghahn Books.
- Thondup, Gyalo, and Anne F. Thurston. 2015. *The Noodle Maker of Kalimpong: The Untold Story of My Struggle for Tibet*. New York: Public Affairs.
- Time 1950. "Haven't We Met?" *Time*, 0040781X, 12/4/1950, 56 (23).