

AFS 2020

Session 08-02:
Building and
Revitalizing
Communities

10:30 am,
Saturday,
October 17,
2020

Presenters:

- ▶ Ngo Thanh Nhan (Temple University)
An approach to revitalization Hat Xam
“the blind beggar folk songs of Vietnam”
- ▶ Mariah E Marsden (Ohio State University)
The Folklore of the Pump: Contested
Space in the Center of a Missouri Road
- ▶ Amit Singh (Ambedkar University, Dehli)
An Intangible Cultural Heritage Site and
the Negotiations of a Religious Order of
Transgenders: A Study of Kinnar Akhara in
the Context of Kumbh Mela
- ▶ Dr. Mayanglambam Sadananda Singh
(Dhanamanjuri University, Manipur, India)
Revitalization Movement of Sanamahi
Religion in Manipur: A Folkloristics
Perspective
- ▶ Chariah Bishop (AFS Zoom Monitor)

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Ngo Thanh
Nhan:

**An approach
to revitalization
Hat Xam “the
blind beggar
folk songs of
Vietnam”**

Presenter #1 (15 mins):

- ▶ Ngo Thanh Nhan (Temple University, Emeritus)
- ▶ *The Linguistic String Project*, New York University Courant Institute of Mathematical Sciences, and *Folk Music Studies at the Center for Vietnamese Philosophy, Culture & Society* of Temple University.

▶ ABSTRACT:

Hát Xẩm “the blind beggar folk music” has been marginalized in the Vietnamese written/literary history. Illiterate beggars, the lowest class, are believed to be incapable of creating music and literature. Bibliographic search for this genre is impossible. Yet, hundreds of singers, artists and musicians are still performing in the lower Red River delta. The national approach, since 1954, to help Hát Xẩm was research, preservation, and advancement, which has not yielded any significant improvement. The new approach explores a series of studies mixing performers and researchers, using web technologies, and multi-disciplinary approach, chiefly folklore, ethnomusicology, sociology, and oral history. The song *Giọt nước cánh bèo* “A fern petal in the turbulent stream” shows its richness in the Vietnamese folk arts.

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Mariah E.
Marsden:

**The Folklore of
the Pump:
Contested
Space in the
Center of a
Missouri Road**

Presenter #2 (15 mins):

▶ Mariah E Marsden (Ohio State University)

▶ Mariah is a PhD student at the Ohio State University, where she studies folklore and narratives (both oral and written). Her work in rural print culture often explores the intersection of institutional and vernacular discourses, covering such issues as local journalism and contemporary farm bookkeeping as well as 19th-century agricultural bulletins and letters to the editor. She also analyzes narratives of place, ranging from the Missouri Ozark region to the imagined geography of tabletop gaming spaces.

▶ ABSTRACT:

In recent years, residents of La Russell, Missouri, have rallied around the rural town's iconic feature: the hand-operated water pump that sits in the center of main street. Aware that it is both a driving hazard and a relic of the past, residents nevertheless campaign for its protection through legends, stories, and Pump parades. I analyze these traditions within larger discussions of rural displacement and feelings of alienation. What are the affordances of the Pump as a symbol of resilience, obstinacy, and the residual? What visions of rural life are codified through this icon, and what operate on the periphery?

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Amit Singh
(Ambedkar University,
Dehli)
**An Intangible Cultural
Heritage Site and the
Negotiations of a
Religious Order of
Transgenders: A
Study of Kinnar
Akhara in the
Context of Kumbh
Mela**

Presenter #3 (15 mins):

▶ Amit Singh (Ambedkar University, Dehli)

▶ Dr. Amit Singh is a teacher of English Literature at Ambedkar University Delhi, which is located in the capital city of India. His research interest primarily lies in folklore and folkloristics with a special focus on Asia. Currently, he engaged in investigating space vis-a-vis cultural and heritage sites such as Kumbh Mela at Allahabad in India. He has been a regular member of AFS since 2016.

▶ ABSTRACT:

My paper attempts to investigate the processes through which an extremely marginalized community of transgenders at the periphery organized itself into a powerful and influential religious order, known as Kinnar Akhara, i.e. "The Religious Sect or Order of Transgenders." Further, this paper would investigate some specific spatial conjunctions as the factors of change and negotiation that facilitated the entry of Kinnar Akhara into the elite and absolute "center" occupied, governed, and dominated by the mainstream Hindu religious orders since time immemorial. I, also, propose to highlight the Kumbh Mela as the anomalous site that blurs the conventional boundaries of infallible institutions and structures. In the process, a mosaic of various struggles, myths, histories, epics, scriptures, perceptions, legal battles, etc., would be investigated to testify and justify, via the success story of Kinnar Akhara, the subversion, appropriation, and/or restructuring of what seems to be an infallible center.

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Dr.
Mayanglambam
Sadananda Singh
(Dhanamanjuri
University, Manipur,
India)
**Revitalization
Movement of
Sanamahi Religion
in Manipur: A
Folkloristics
Perspective**

Presenter #4 (15 mins):

- ▶ Prof. Mayanglambam Sadananda Singh (Department of Manipuri, DM College of Arts, Dhanamanjuri University, Imphal West, Manipur, India)
- ▶ Dr. Singh, an exponent of traditional storytelling art of *Wari Leeba*. In 2014 as a recipient of **Albert B. Lord Fellowship** he worked at the Center for Studies in Oral Tradition, University of Missouri, US for three months. He gave lectures on Manipuri folklore at University of Tartu, University of Missouri and also The Ohio State University. He has published two books and a number of papers written in Manipuri and English
- ▶ ABSTRACT:

The adoption of Hinduism as the state religion of Manipur during the reign of King Garibniwaz (1709–1748) initiated the marginalization of Sanamahi religion in the state. To make Manipur a stronghold of Hindu culture, various processes of Sanskritization continued until the earlier faith was marginalized. In response to it a resistance movement emerged in 1930 for revitalizing the Sanamahi religion. As a consequence, today many traditions of pre-Hindu faiths and beliefs have gradually been revitalized and recentered. The paper attempts to discuss the ramifications of revitalization movement of Sanamahi religion from a folkloristics point of view.

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