

Yale Himalaya Initiative



THE YALE HIMALAYA INITIATIVE (YHI) brings together faculty, students and professionals across Yale University, whose work focuses on the Himalayan regions of Nepal, India, Bhutan, Pakistan and China, as well as the Tibetan cultural areas that traverse the borders of all those states.

YHI is the first comprehensive, interdisciplinary University-led initiative in North America to engage with the Himalaya as a trans-regional whole, while at once recognizing its ecological, social and political diversity. Focusing broadly on the themes of environment, livelihoods, and culture, we support the development of teaching and scholarship on topics related to the Himalayan region by drawing upon the combined intellectual resources of members across the Yale community. We encourage the widest possible interdisciplinary participation, in collaboration with scholars, practitioners, and communities in the Himalayan region itself.

The Initiative's scope spans the humanities, social sciences, natural sciences, and professional disciplines. It draws upon the expertise of Yale faculty members in the Arts and Sciences (Anthropology, History, History of Art, Religious Studies),

himalaya.yale.edu

Yale's professional schools (Forestry and Environmental Science, Law, Management, Public Health, Medical), and other University centers including the MacMillan Center for International and Area Studies, and the Global Health Initiative of the Jackson Institute for Global Affairs. The Initiative builds upon existing research projects and strong disciplinary networks to promote broader collaborative efforts at Yale, while also developing lasting partnerships with research institutions, government agencies and NGOs throughout the region.

YHI was launched in 2011 and began operating fully in the 2011-2012 academic year. During that time, the Initiative has hosted an interdisciplinary seminar series, with ten events spread over the course of the year. Speakers have included anthropologists, foresters, economists, doctors, conservationists, geographers and policy makers, who addressed a range of issues in Bhutan, China, India and Nepal. The Initiative looks forward to expanding the scope of its lecture series – both geographically and thematically – in future years.

A larger workshop focused on the theme of 'Himalayan Connections' is being planned for 2013. Additional activities have included consultations and partnerships in the Himalayan region. A workshop was held in Dehradun, India in August 2011, and a second workshop will be held in Kathmandu, Nepal in August 2012. These events are oriented towards developing shared research priorities, which to date include:

- Migration and land use change
- Urban growth in the Himalaya: environmental, social and political issues
- Community forestry: trans-regional lessons in theory and practice
- Sacred geography and pilgrimage in a cross-border context
- Linguistic diversity and educational transformation
- Literary and artistic production and dissemination
- Ethnicity, inequality and conflict
- Religious and cultural history of pre-modern and early modern traditions.

For more information, please contact Dr Mark Turin at himalaya@yale.edu