

A Village in
the Mountains

25

**Exhibition texts
in large format**



Please return the item!

Exhibition texts in large print

On the following pages you will find all the exhibition texts in large print. There is a separate copy for each exhibition room, labelled with the respective room number.

This booklet is intended for use during your visit to the museum.

Please return the booklet before leaving the room!

All exhibition texts in large print are also available for download on our website:

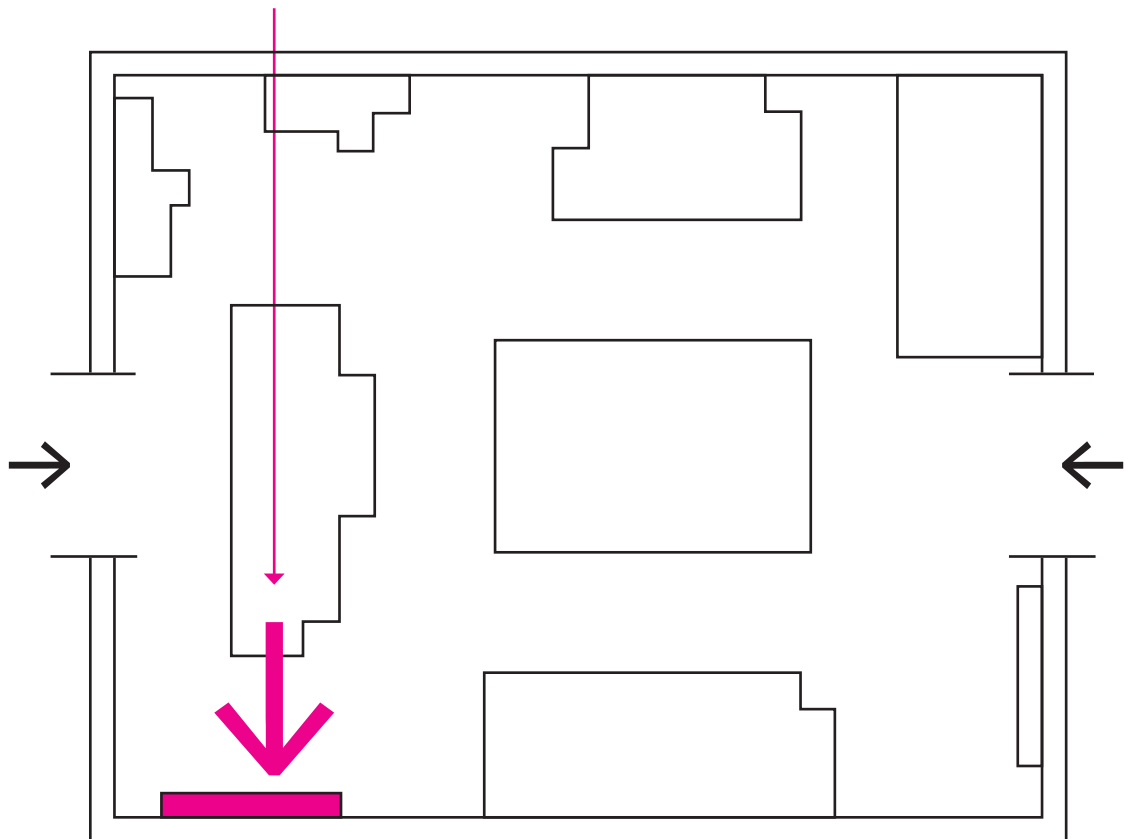


We hope you enjoy your visit to the Weltmuseum Wien!

Vienna, December 2024

Room 25

Start



A Village in the Mountains

This gallery offers the opportunity to take part in the life of the residents of a Himalayan Buddhist village. Participating in the life of “others” also means asking questions of oneself: Where is the centre of my life? Who do I share it with? Why do I leave it? Where do I work? How do I view my environment? Which gods do I believe in and where do I encounter them? And perhaps the most fundamental of all questions: How do I explain the world to myself?

The model staging of a village in the mountains reveals how the residents of such a village answer these questions. This schematic representation focuses on the relationships between individuals living and working in different places. Some live in the house in a village and work in the surrounding fields, some on pastures higher up the mountain, others as monks or nuns in a monastery, and very few are drawn to a solitary and ascetic life in the mountains. Particular attention is dedicated to the intertwining of religious beliefs and profane actions. It is this connection that unlocks the meaning of the world for those living in the

Himalayas. This world no longer seems to attract many young people. Especially those with a formal education venture out and seek a better life in the cities with all their risks and opportunities.



The perspective of an anthropologist on a “foreign” culture permeates this gallery – foreign to the visitor but not to the curator. After all, he shared many years of his life with those he tells us about, carrying on the long tradition of Austrian research in the Himalayas.

In the planning stage, he often thought of those he respected and those few to whom he became attached. Nevertheless, he refrains from elaborating on individual life stories. Instead he presents the most important findings of his research based on the model of a fictive village that does not exist as such.

The curator did not follow common museum categorisations but positioned the objects in the room just as he had seen them used in reality. It should, therefore, come as no surprise when a canteen is found directly adjacent to Buddhist ritual objects, as the monk certainly needs to drink during long rituals.

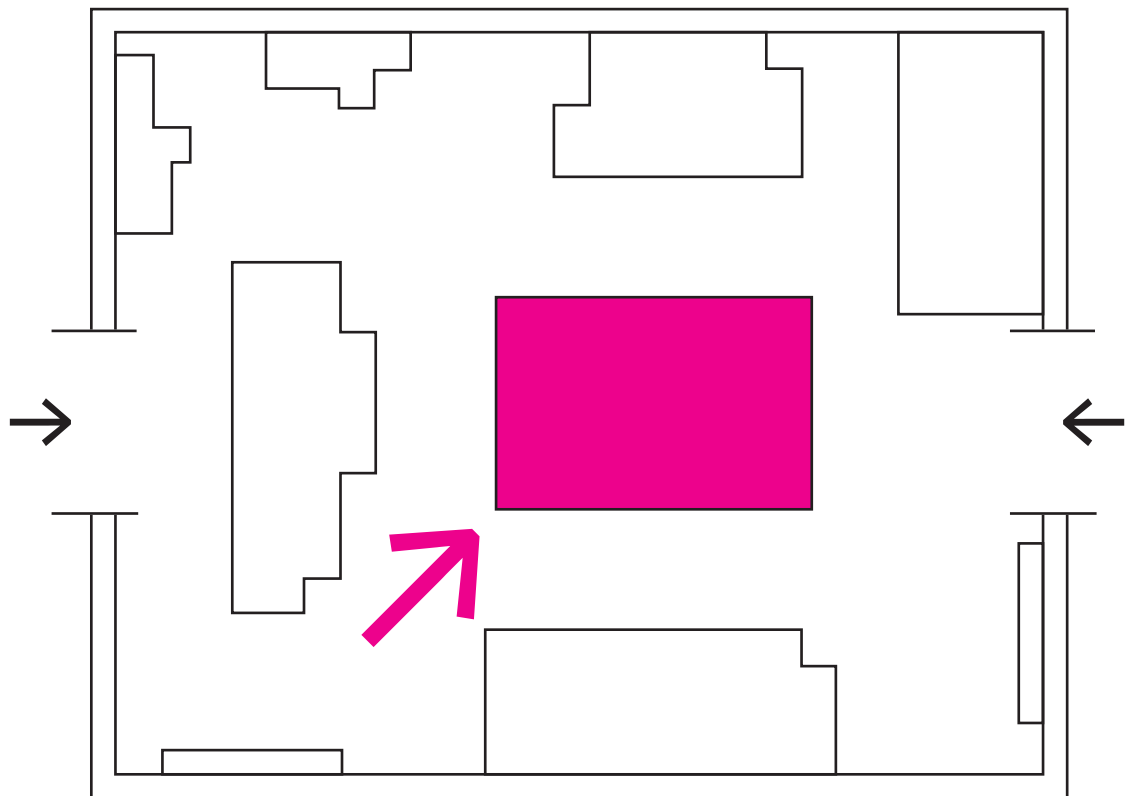
“And people do this, it is still common practice, just not that deliberately. They simply do it.”

Hans Haid, Writer and Folklorist, October 2014

“The myths and legends of the Himalayas make me much more aware of how to understand my own situation.”

Hans Haid, Writer and Folklorist, October 2014

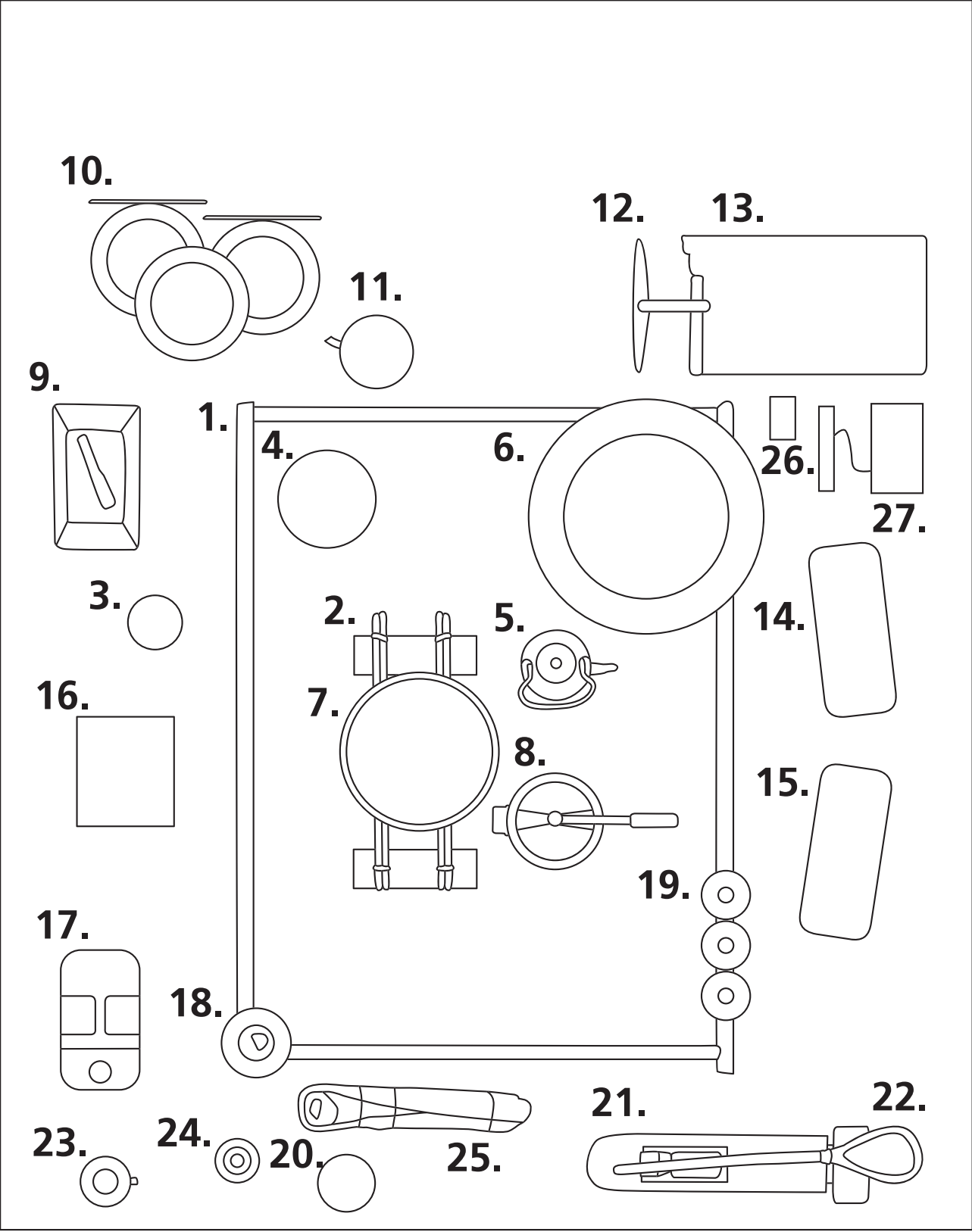
Room 25



Hearth

The hearth is the social and private focus of any home. This is where the head of the household, often a woman, organises the economic life of the family: she decides who works in the fields, who heads for the mountain pastures, who takes care of trading and travelling, and who spends money on what.

The seats at a gathering are arranged according to social status. The higher the status of a man or woman, the closer he or she will sit to the hearth. Whether you travel the spiritual path in solitude or join a monastery, leaving the family hearth with all its secular entanglements behind for good means withdrawing from life. Even when somebody dies, the farewell ritual takes place around the hearth before the journey to the realm of the dead.



The hearth is the focus of all social life in the house. Both family and guests gather around the hearth in which a deity often dwells. It not only receives a small share of the food as offerings but also requires the family to keep the place clean. The objects arranged around this hearth were collected from a wide variety of regions; the diversity of their provenance is intended to emphasise the model character of the installation.

1 Enclosure

North Vietnam, mountains, 20th century;
wood
Christian Schicklgruber Coll.

2 Stove

Nagaland, 20th century; clay, iron
Christian Schicklgruber Coll.

On special occasions, straws are used to drink beer from containers made of bamboo.

3 Beer container

Sikkim, 20th century; bamboo, brass
René de Nebesky-Wojkowitz Coll.

Today industrially produced aluminium utensils have replaced the older ones made of clay.

4 Tea pot

Bhutan, 20th century; clay
Christian Schicklgruber Coll.

5 Tea pot

Bhutan, 20th century; aluminium
Christian Schicklgruber Coll.

6 Bowl

Bhutan, 20th century; wood
Christian Schicklgruber Coll.

7 Cooking pot

Bhutan, 20th century; aluminium
Christian Schicklgruber Coll.

8 Pressure cooker

Bhutan, 20th century; aluminium, plastic
Christian Schicklgruber Coll.

9 Dough bowl with spatula

Bhutan, 20th century; wood
Christian Schicklgruber Coll.

10 Plate

Bhutan, 20th century; aluminium
Christian Schicklgruber Coll.

11 Capacity measure

Bhutan, 20th century; iron, leather
Christian Schicklgruber Coll.

12 Broom

North Vietnam, mountains, 20th century;
plastic
Christian Schicklgruber Coll.

13 Chest

Bhutan, 20th century; wood
Christian Schicklgruber Coll.

14-16

Stool

Nagaland, 20th century; wood
Christian Schicklgruber Coll.

17 Canister

Bhutan, 20th century; plastic
Christian Schicklgruber Coll.

18 Pot

Nepal, 20th century; brass

René de Nebesky-Wojkowitz Coll.

19 Bowls

Bhutan, 20th century; plastic

Christian Schicklgruber Coll.

20 Spittoon

Bhutan, 20th century; brass

Christian Schicklgruber Coll.

21 Noodle press

Bhutan, 20th century; wood, horn

Christian Schicklgruber Coll.

22 Strainer

Bhutan, 20th century; wood, bamboo

Christian Schicklgruber Coll.

Chinese tea has for centuries been ex-ported to the Himalayas to be consumed with butter and salt. The nutritious beverage is a true delight if consumed hot.

23 Thermos flask

Bhutan, 20th century; aluminium, plastic
Christian Schicklgruber Coll.

24 Butter tea churner

Ladakh, 20th century; plastic, brass
John D. Marshall Coll.

25 Tea

Bhutan, 20th century; tea, plant leaf
Christian Schicklgruber Coll.

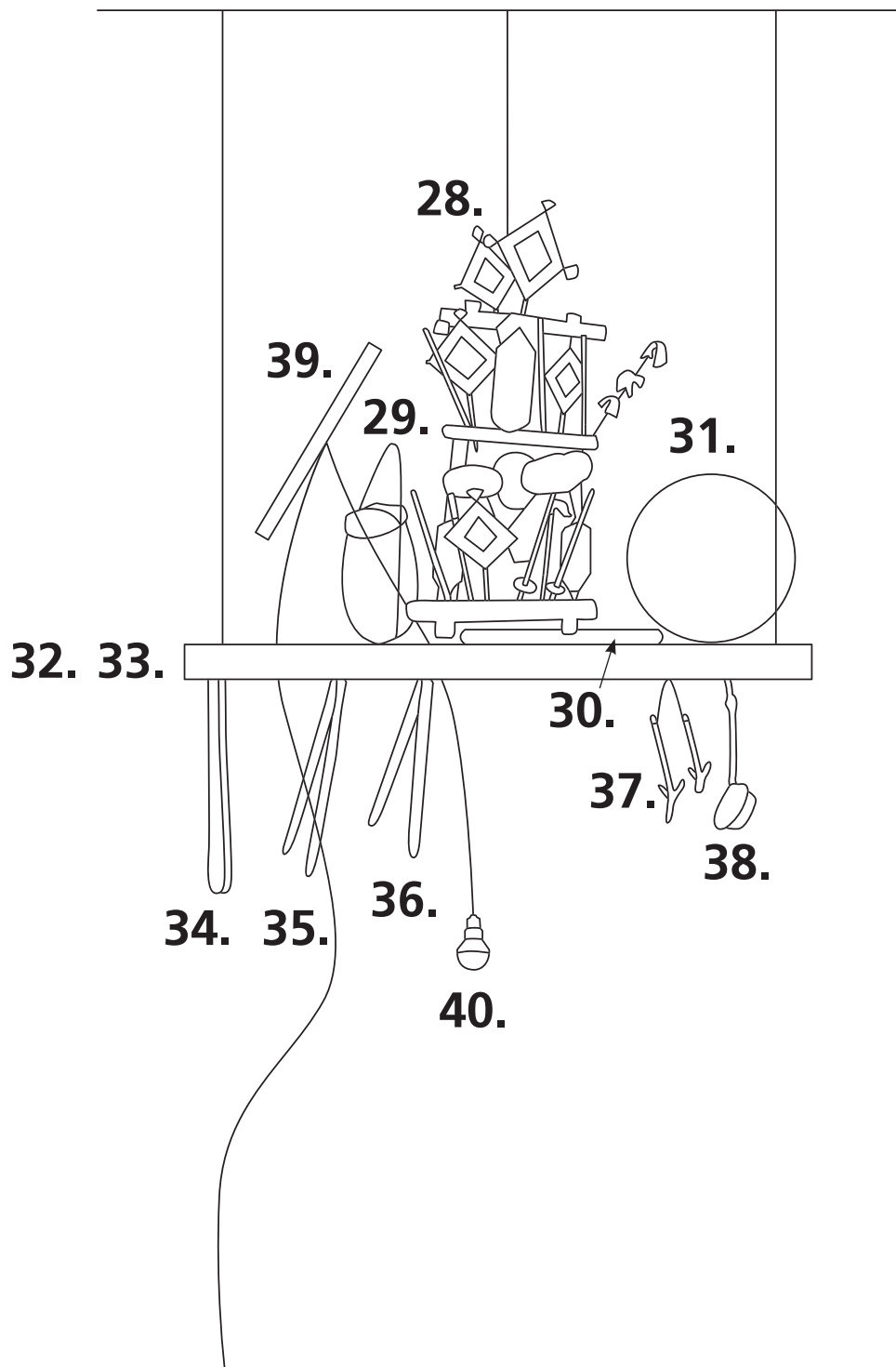
Radios were the only technical connection to the outer world until a few years ago. Today, young people in particular prefer smartphones.

26 Radio

Nepal, 21st century
Christian Schicklgruber Coll.

27 Mobile phone

Nepal, 21st century
Christian Schicklgruber Coll.



Above the doors to many Himalayan houses or temples, sculptures literally called "Heaven's Gate Earth's Gate" provide protection against the harmful influences of demons. This sculpture was especially made for the Weltmuseum Wien by priests from Nepal.

28 Protective charm

Nepal, 20th century; bamboo, wood, wool,
papier mâché

Kemi Tsemang Coll.

In many rural areas from the Pakistani Indus Valley to the mountains of northern Vietnam, you will find racks hanging above the fireplace to dry or store all kinds of objects.

29 Basket

Nagaland, 20th century; bamboo

Christoph von Fürer-Haimendorf Coll.

30 Hanging bowl

Nagaland, 20th century; bamboo

Christian Schicklgruber Coll.

31 Hamper

Nagaland, 20th century; bamboo

Christoph von Fürer-Haimendorf Coll.

32 Grid

Bhutan, 20th century; wood

Christian Schicklgruber Coll.

33 Mat

North Vietnam, mountains, 20th century;
wood

Christian Schicklgruber Coll.

34 Wooden spoon

North Vietnam, mountains, 20th century;
wood

Christian Schicklgruber Coll.

35, 36

Tongs

North Vietnam, mountains, 20th century;
bamboo

Christian Schicklgruber Coll.

37 Hook

Bhutan, 20th century; wood, leather, yak hair
Christian Schicklgruber Coll.

38 Ladle

Ladakh, 20th century; brass
John D. Marshall Coll.

Today, the roofs of almost all houses or mountain cabins are equipped with solar panels feeding a rechargeable battery. A so-called "solar charger" distributes the generated electricity to light bulbs, mobile phones and other devices.

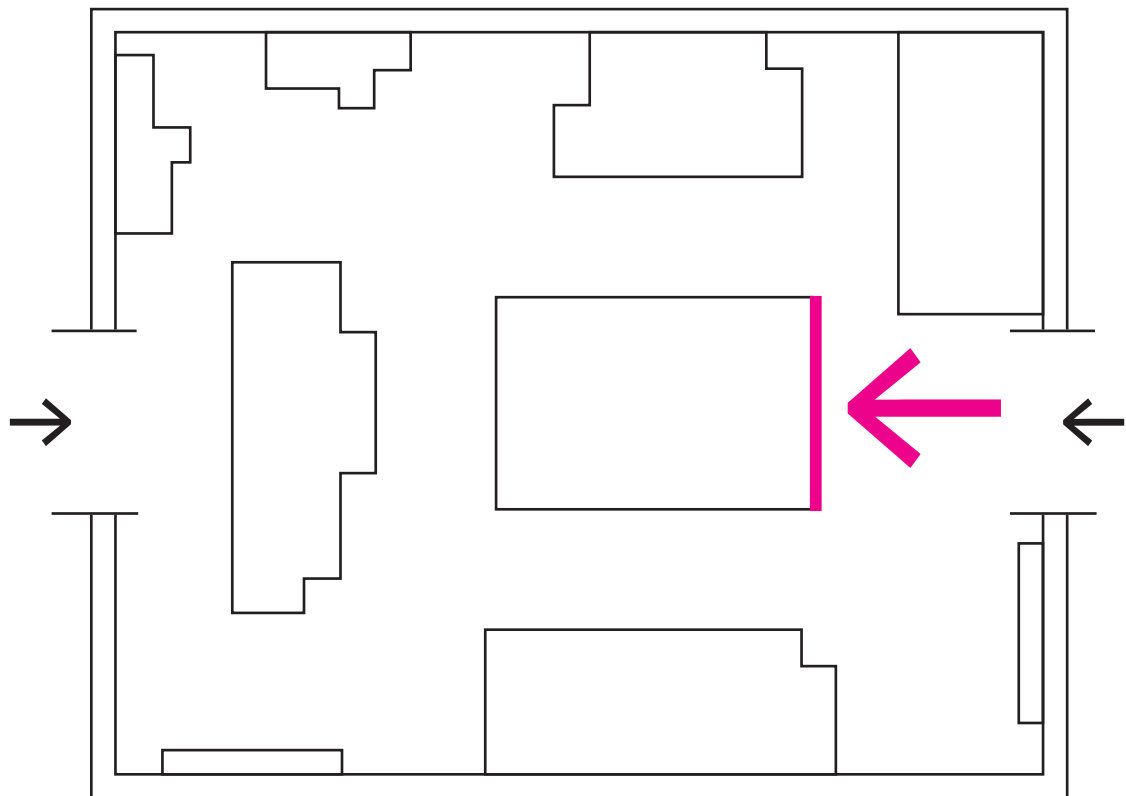
39 Solar power system

Nepal, 21st century; plastic, metal, glass
Christian Schicklgruber Coll.

40 LED light bulb

Nepal, 21st century; plastic
Christian Schicklgruber Coll.

Room 25



Home Shrine

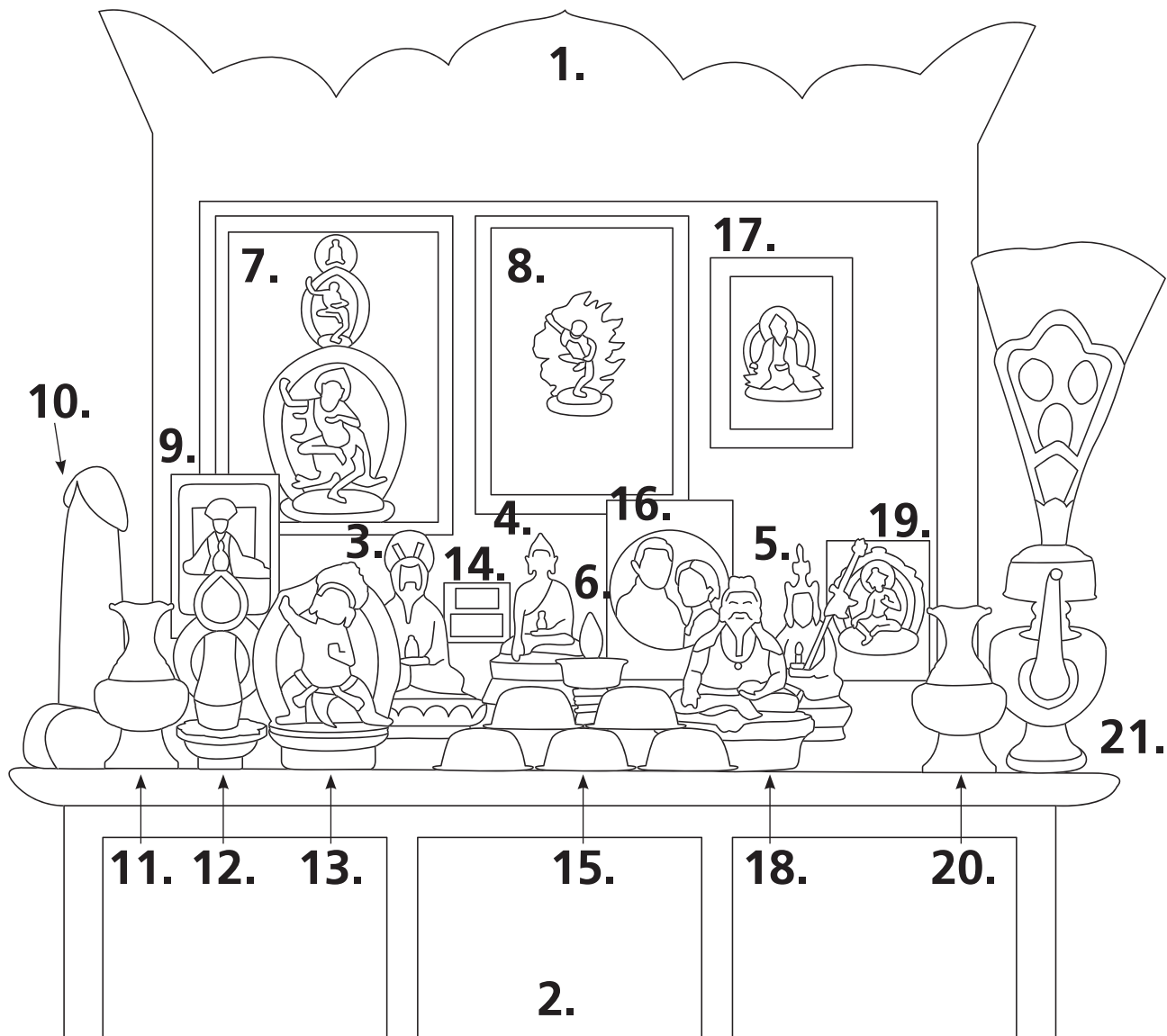
Religious ceremonies for the family take place at the home shrine.

A local priest or an invited monk of a monastery addresses the gods to ask them for protection.

Aside from the gods that are also worshipped at the temple, the sacred mountains as well as the deities literally called Owners of Livelihoods play a major role.

These gods are worshipped in a special ceremony at least once a year, while weddings, death, illness or other occasions require different rituals.

An older male or female family member usually ensures the benevolence of the gods by offering sacrifice at the home shrine every day. This is also how this world and the next are kept in balance.



Just as we have seen around the hearth, objects from various regions are positioned next to each other at the home shrine. Nevertheless, this shrine and the way it is arranged might still be found as such in a single household. Here at the museum, the shrine demonstrates how regular offerings are made to the gods and which ritual objects are kept at the home shrine. We have created a place where a priest could actually per-form a ritual.

1 Hutch

Bhutan, 20th century; wood
Christian Schicklgruber Coll.

2 Cabinet

Bhutan, 20th century; wood
Christian Schicklgruber Coll.

Many shrines in Bhutan place the historical Buddha Shakyamuni, Guru Rinpoche and the cleric Shabdrung Ngawang Namgyel side by side. In Tibet, for example, it would not be possible to position a human being who lived sometime in the past next to two divine beings.

3 Shabdrung Ngawang Namgyel

Bhutan, 20th century; metal
Christian Schicklgruber Coll.

4 Buddha Shakyamuni

Bhutan, 20th century; metal
Christian Schicklgruber Coll.

5 Guru Rinpoche

Bhutan, 20th century; metal
Christian Schicklgruber Coll.

The traditional butter lamp with a burning flame is often replaced by an electric butter lamp. In Buddhist philosophy, the electric lamp is highly valued, as it saves insects from being burnt.

6 Butter lamp

Bhutan, 20th century; plastic, glass
Christian Schicklgruber Coll.

7, 17

Devotional image

Bhutan, 20th century; paper
Christian Schicklgruber Coll.

8 Dakini

Bhutan, 20th century; paper
Christian Schicklgruber Coll.

9 Lama

Bhutan, 20th century; paper
Christian Schicklgruber Coll.

10 Phallic symbol

Bhutan, 20th century; wood
Christian Schicklgruber Coll.

11, 20

Flower vases

Nepal, 20th century; copper, plastic flowers

Christian Schicklgruber Coll.

12 Symbol for longevity

Bhutan, 20th century; clay

Christian Schicklgruber Coll.

13 Chagna Dorje

Bhutan, 20th century; clay

Christian Schicklgruber Coll.

14 Banknotes

Bhutan, 20th century; paper

Eva Polesnik Coll.

15 Offering bowls

If the bowls of water happen to be empty, they are stacked upside down in front of the shrine.

Bhutan, 20th century; copper

Christian Schicklgruber Coll.

16 Reversible figure: royal couple

Bhutan, 20th century; paper
Christian Schicklgruber Coll.

18 Tangthong Gyalpo

Bhutan, 20th century; clay
Christian Schicklgruber Coll.

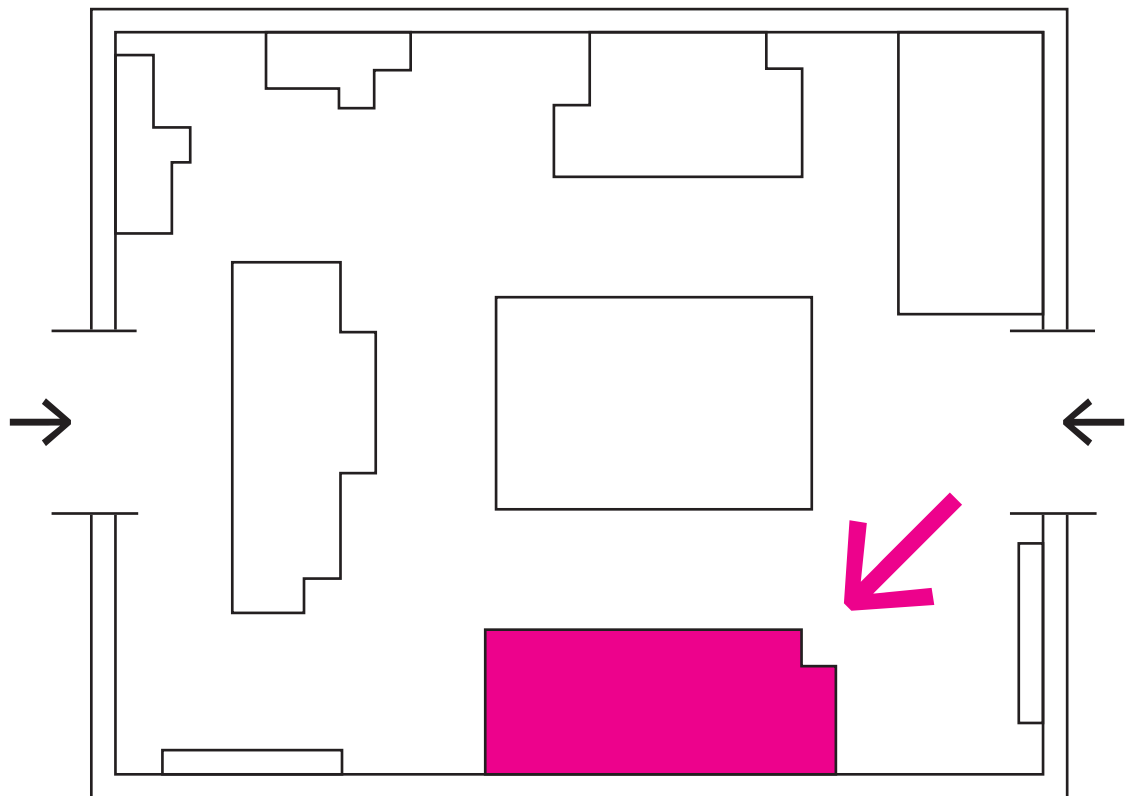
19 Green Tara

Bhutan, 20th century; paper
Christian Schicklgruber Coll.

21 Ritual vase

Nepal, 20th century; copper, grass,
peacock feathers
Christian Schicklgruber Coll.

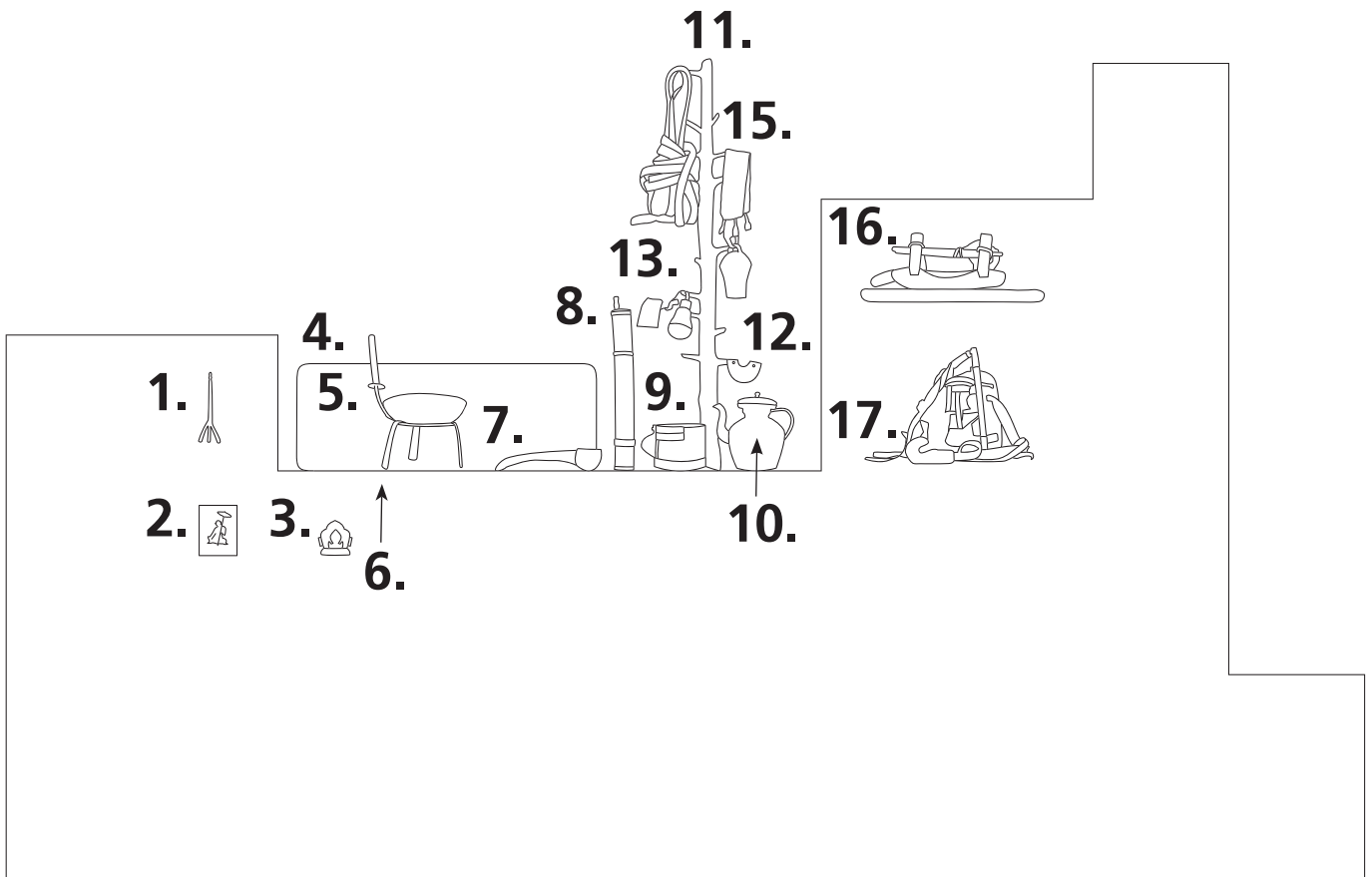
Room 25



High Mountain Pastures

While some family members live in the village and work in the fields, others rear their flocks of sheep, goats or yaks on pastures far above the valleys. The hair of the animals is used to make tents, the meat is eaten or traded for rice, and the milk is processed into butter or cheese. Yaks carry heavy loads and their dried dung is used as fuel for fire.

The traffic never stops between the village and the high mountain pastures: shepherds carry their products to the village, which in turn supplies food to the pastures. A small shrine or at least the statue of a deity is found in the tent. The shepherds regularly offer sacrifices to the gods, even when they are far away from the village, because divine intervention ensures their safety and protection against evil beings from the other world.



Although the shepherds bring along most of their equipment from the villages, some is made when needed.

When the shepherds move on, it is usually left behind (or finds its way into a museum).

1 Butter churn

Bhutan, 20th century; wood
Christian Schicklgruber Coll.

11 Staff for hanging up equipment

Bhutan, 20th century; wood
Christian Schicklgruber Coll.

12 Sucking prevention ring

Bhutan, 20th century; wood, yak hair
Christian Schicklgruber Coll.

Neither object was acquired on mountain pastures but could certainly be found there. They illustrate the need of shepherds for spiritual protection against potential hardships.

2 Sitapatra

Mongolia, 19th century; wood, mineral paint
Hans Leder Coll.

3 Amulet holder

Sikkim or Tibet, 19th century; copper
Franz Ferdinand of Austria-Este Coll.

Due to technical and conservation reasons, the tent of black yak hair has not been set up. Instead, it is presented as usually transported on the backs of pack animals.

4 Tent

Bhutan, 20th century; yak hair
Christian Schicklgruber Coll.

The same equipment as in the house is used around the hearth in the tent.

5 Pan

Nepal, 20th century; iron, wood
András Höfer Coll.

6 Tripod pedestal

Nepal, 20t century; iron
András Höfer Coll.

7 Ladle

Nepal, 20t century; wood
René de Nebesky-Wojkowitz Coll.

8 Cylinder for preparing tea

Nepal, 20th century; bamboo, wood, brass
René de Nebesky-Wojkowitz Coll.

9 Vessel

Bhutan, 20th century; wood
Christian Schicklgruber Coll.

10 Teapot

Bhutan, 20th century; aluminium
Christian Schicklgruber Coll.

Today solar lamps are highly valued.

13 Solar panel and LED lamp

Nepal, 21 century; plastic
Christian Schicklgruber Coll.

Some of the shepherds' temporary shelters are just a few hours walking time from the village; others require hikes of several days. Goods are regularly exchanged between the villages and mountain pastures, and transported on pack animals whenever possible.

14 Belt

Bhutan, 20th century; leather
Christian Schicklgruber Coll.

15 Animal bell

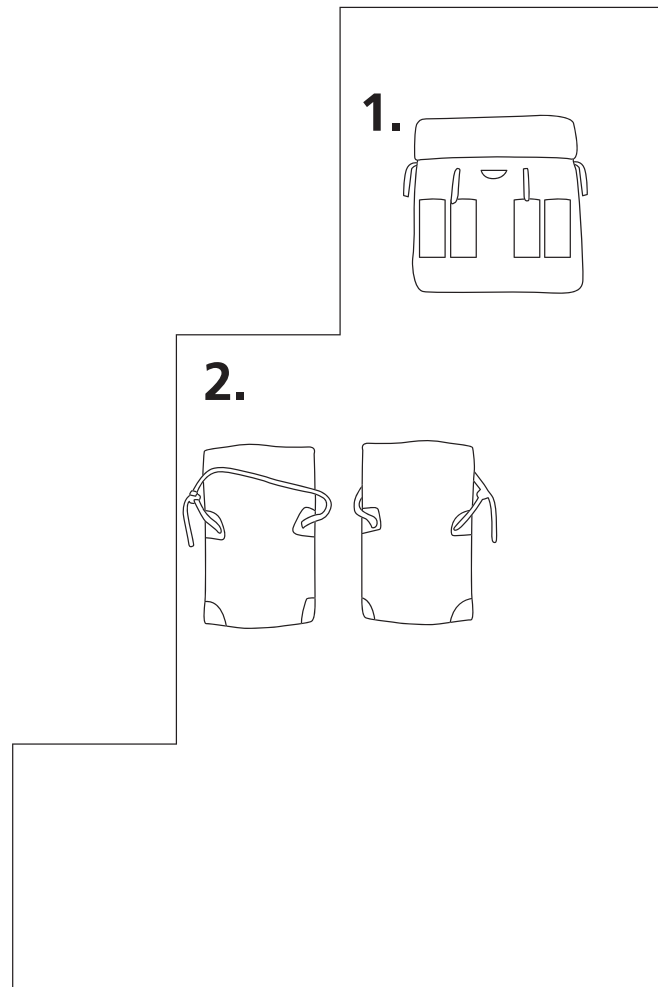
Bhutan, 20th century; iron, horn, yak hair
Christian Schicklgruber Coll.

16 Pack saddle

Bhutan, 20th century; wood, wool, leather
Christian Schicklgruber Coll.

17 Pack saddle

Bhutan, 20th century; wood, leather, textile
Christian Schicklgruber Coll.



Bags and baskets are not only used for whatever needs to be carried from villages to mountain pastures and back but also for storing food, clothes and equipment.

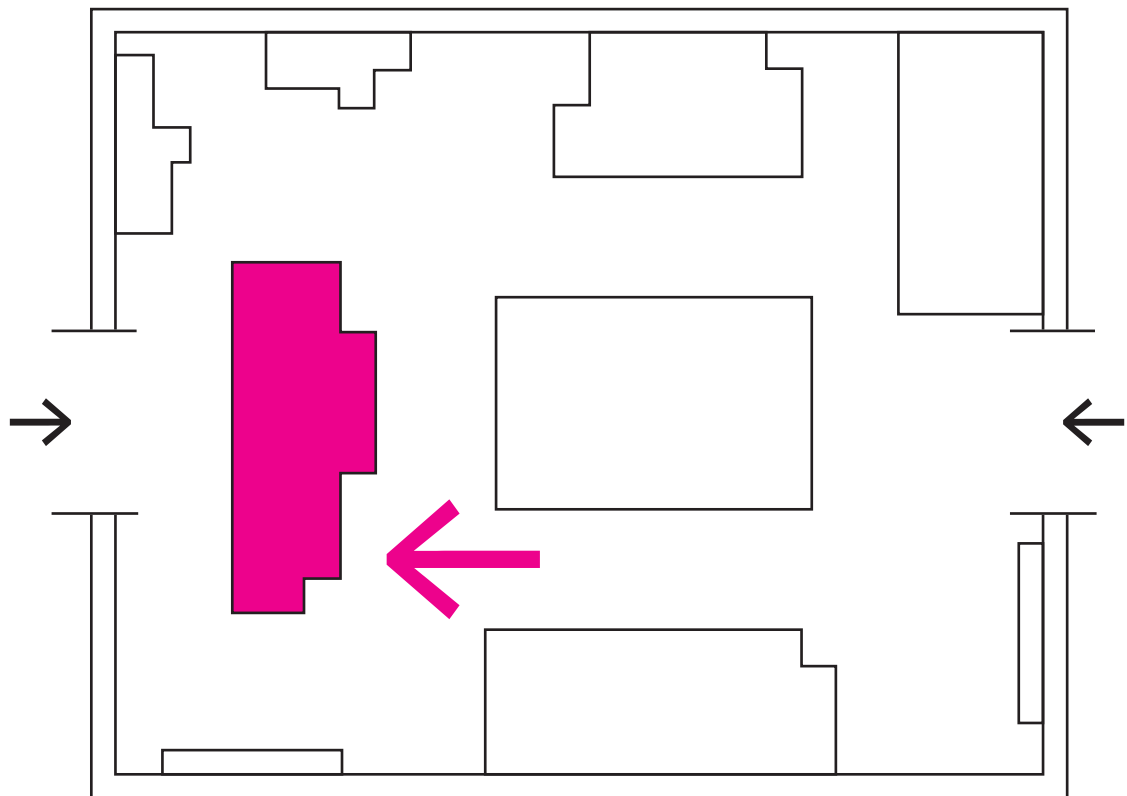
1 Basket

Bhutan, 20th century; bamboo, leather
Christian Schicklgruber Coll.

2 Pack bags

Bhutan, 20th century; yak hair
Christian Schicklgruber Coll.

Room 25

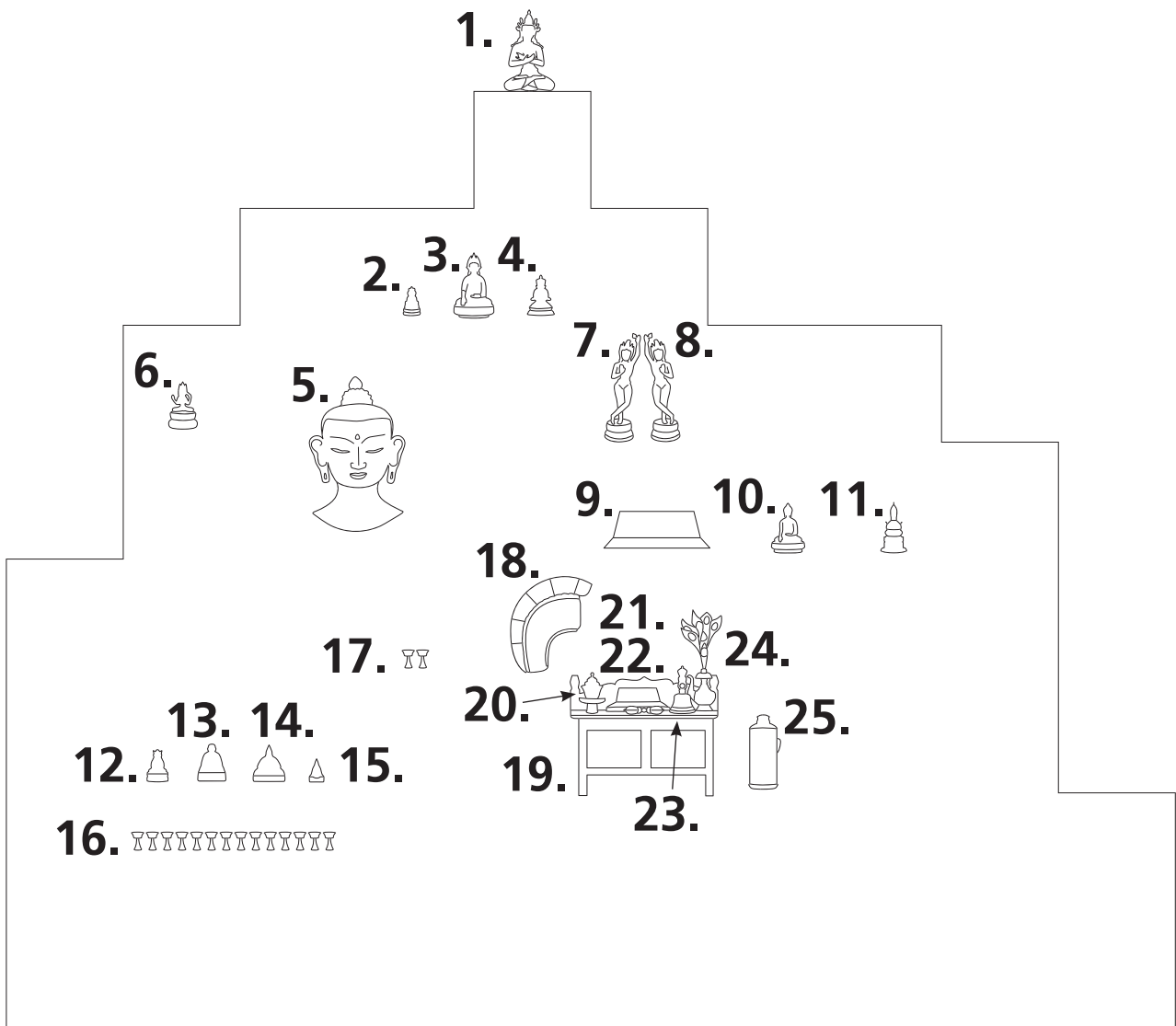


Monastery

Many families send a son, and in rarer cases a daughter, to become a monk or nun in a monastery, where meditation and studying sacred texts is believed to teach them that gods do not really exist and are merely an expression of spiritual forces on the path to enlightenment. Laypeople usually have little use for such thinking. Instead they offer sacrifice to their gods on shrines and expect their divine assistance in this life.

The laity do not actively participate in the rituals at the temple of a monastery. Instead, they focus on accumulating religious merit by making donations to monasteries, lighting butter lamps, or setting out on pilgrimage. In doing so, they hope for a favourable reincarnation into a life that will lead them to enlightenment. This is best attained as a monk or nun.

The shrine is considered to be the throne of the gods. Here at the museum, the sculptures are arranged differently than on a real temple shrine. It is rather based on the understanding of the representation of Buddha as taught in Buddhist philosophy. After Buddha changed from a person pointing out a path to salvation to a supernatural being, many further forms and representations of Buddha emerged which are effective on specific planes of existence. This fundamental idea is only disclosed to the Buddhist clergy. In contrast, for lay Buddhists, it is extremely important that all statues be present in the temple when they visit it.



Vajradhara, „Holder of the Diamond Sceptre“, represents the unconceptual and indestructible nature of the Buddhist teaching. Considered the „Body of Reality“, this embodiment is transcendental and beyond designations, attributions and expressions.

1 Vajradhara

Nepal, 20th century; copper
Christian Schicklgruber Coll.

Dhyani buddhas epitomise the fundamental philosophical principles of Buddhism. They convert the causes for staying inside the cycle of rebirth — ignorance, hatred, pride, desire, greed — into their antidote wisdoms. Their qualities may be experienced through meditation.

2 Vairocana

Nepal, 17th century; brass
Imperial and Royal Cabinet of Coins and Antiquities Coll.

3 Aksobhya

Nepal, 19th century; bronze
Theodor Manak Coll.

4 Amitayus

China, 18th century; brass
Paul Riebeck Coll.

5 Amithaba

Nepal, 17th century; bronze
Peter Hardt Coll.

Bodhisattvas, the so-called „enlightened beings“, postpone their own salvation due to their universal compassion and remain on earth until all living beings are liberated from the cycle of rebirth. Moreover, they also provide protection against the dangers that threaten the path to Nirvana: pride, delusion, anger, jealousy, wrong views, greed, desire and doubt.

6 Avalokiteshvara

Sikkim, 18th century; bronze

Franz Ferdinand of Austria-Este Coll.

In Buddhist teaching, Tara is regarded as „the protective activity of compassion“. She provides protection from danger on the path to Nirvana: pride, delusion, anger, jealousy, wrong views, greed, desire and doubt. In the eyes of many lay Buddhists seeking assistance in solving everyday problems, she almost assumes motherly qualities.

7, 8

Tara

Nepal, 19th /20th century; brass

Theodor Manak Coll.

In Tibetan Buddhism, each temple incorporates the three aspects of Buddha: a statue represents the body, a stupa stands for the mind, and a religious text for his teachings.

9 Religious text

Mongolia, 18th century; paper
Hans Leder Coll.

10 Buddha Shakyamuni

Nepal, 21th century; bronze, fire gilding
John D. Marshall Coll., donation

11 Stupa

Mongolia, 18th century; bronze
Alfred Horner Coll.

Believers entering a temple will first bow to the lama, the priest and teacher. After all, it is the lama who indicates the path to enlightenment and performs religious rituals for the benefit of lay Buddhists. The founders and great masters of various schools of Tibetan Buddhism are depicted in the robes of a lama.

12 Guru Rinpoche

Tibet, 15th century; nickel silver
Khem Bahadur Gurung Coll.

13 Öndör Gegen Zanabazar

Mongolia, 19th century; clay
Hans Leder Coll.

14 Fifth Dalai Lama

Mongolia, 19th century; clay
Hans Leder Coll.

15 Tsongkhapa

Tibet, 19th century; bronze
Alexander Ronald Coll.

The gods are regularly presented with offerings at the shrine. The everburning butter lamps, for example, are pleasing to their sense of sight.

16 Butter lamps

Nepal, 20th century; brass
Christian Schicklgruber Coll.

17 Butter lamps

Nepal, 19th /20th century; nickel silver
Theodor Manak Coll.

When the lama performs a ritual, he sits behind a small table to have all required objects at hand. These objects are also kept on the table in the lama's absence to symbolise the eternal presence of the Buddhist teachings. The lama drinks tea during the often lengthy text recitations.

18 Ceremonial hat

Tibet, 20th century; silk, cotton
Glinther Jontes Coll.

19 Lama table

Bhutan, 20th century; wood
Christian Schicklgruber Coll.

20 Tea bowl

Nepal, 19th /20th century; nickel silver, agate
Theodor Manak Coll.

21 Text

Nepal, 20th century; paper
René de Nebesky-Wojkowitz Coll.

22 Diamond sceptre

Tibet, 20th century; bronze
Alexander Ronald Coll.

23 Prayer bell

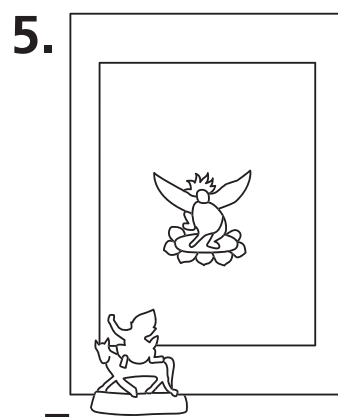
Tibet, 19th century; bronze
Anton Gebauer Coll.

24 Ritual vase

Tibet, 19th century; copper, brass,
peacock feathers
Paul Mowis Coll.

25 Thermos flask

Bhutan, 20th century; aluminium, plastic
Christian Schickigruber Coll.



Many tutelary deities, the so-called „Yidam“, can trace back their origins to the ancient religious traditions of India, from where they found their way into the divine world of Tibetan Buddhism as manifestations of various buddhas or bodhisattvas. They lead and protect, in their meditations, those who are initiated in the secret teachings; they allow the lay person to understand that, in contemplating them, he stands at the border of a meditative, spiritual world.

1 Vajrabhairava

Mongolia, 18th century; clay
K. H. Lindholm Coll.

2 Yama

Mongolia, 18th century; clay
K. H. Lindholm Coll.

3 Cakrasamvara

Tibet, 18th century; stone
Khem Bahadur Gurung Coll.

Tutelary deities have their own room in every temple (Tibetan: génkhang) to protect the Buddhist teachings and Buddhists themselves. They are addressed to assist on the path to enlightenment as well as to master life on earth. Those who have not been initiated in the Buddhist teachings are strictly prohibited from entering; access is also denied to women.

4 Mahakala

Tibet, 19th century; wood
Theodor Manak Coll.

5 Mahakala

Bhutan, 18th century;
mineral colour on canvas
Nagel Auktionen Coll.

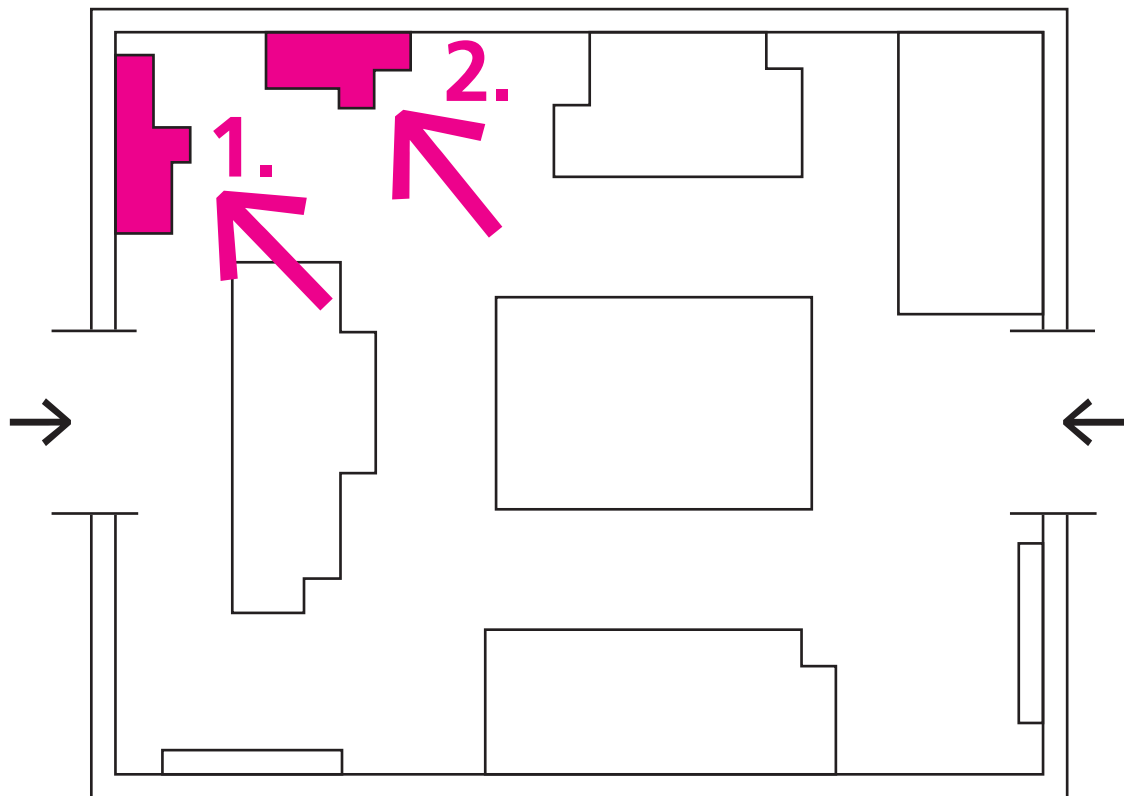
6 Mountain deity

Bhutan, 20th century; clay
Christian Schicklgruber Coll.

7 Palden Lhamo

Mongolia, 18th /19th century; brass
Hans Leder Coll.

Room 25



1.

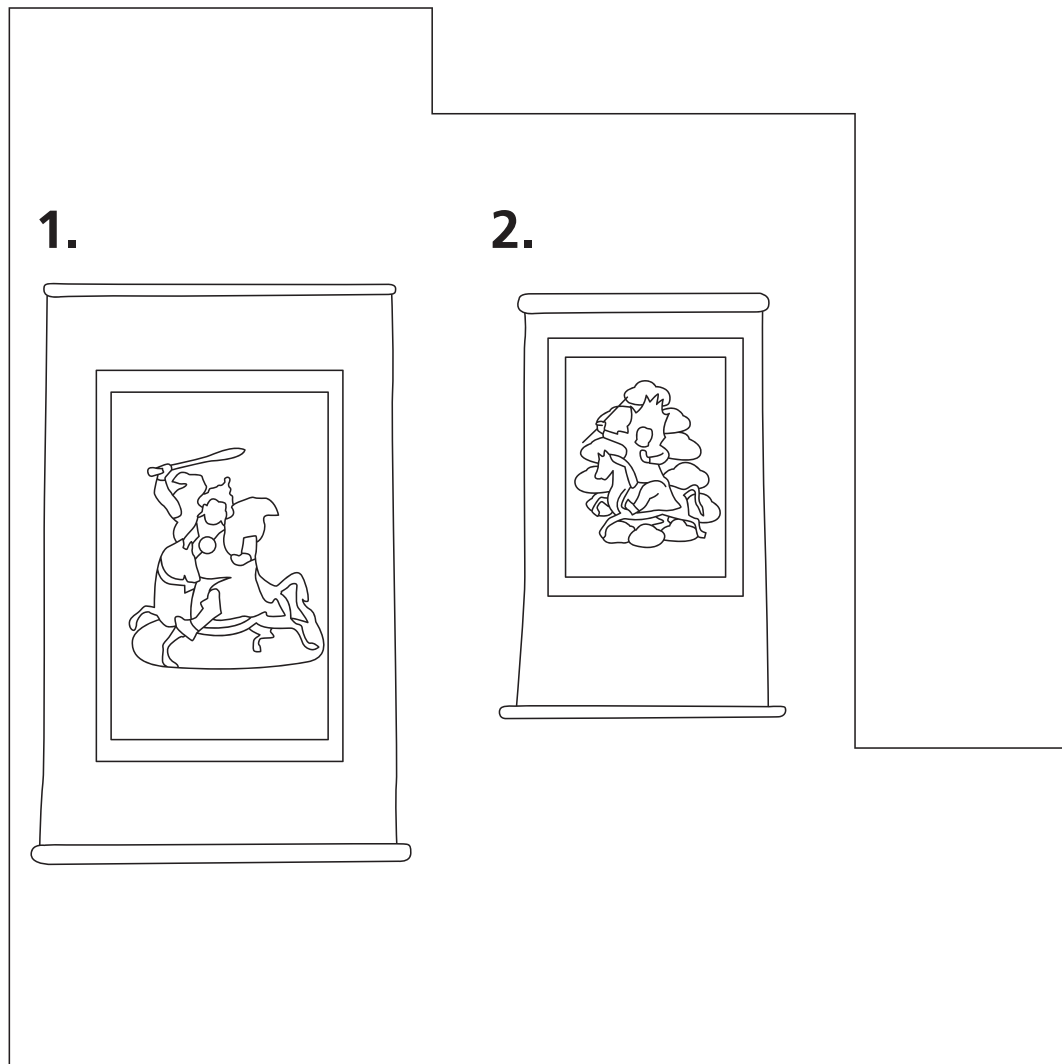
Sacred Mountains

While erudite Buddhists generally strive to exit the cycle of rebirth, laypeople expect much more from their faith. As they need to earn their livelihood under harsh conditions, they require assistance from the sacred mountains.

In return the mountains expect veneration, sacrifice and harmony between the people.

If just one individual breaks a social norm, the holy mountains may withdraw their protection of the entire community. Moreover, the mountains need to be kept pure. If they are polluted or disturbed, they might seek revenge against the people.

Many sacred mountains of pre-Buddhist religion became tutelary deities with the arrival of Buddhism from India. They have been watching over the monasteries, villages and people ever since.



If the sacred mountains are depicted as war deities, they are equipped with bow and arrow, and wear suits of armour. At the upper edge of the canvas, we find gods and high lamas of erudite Buddhism as reference to the integration of these originally pre-Buddhist deities into the divine world of Buddhism. The lower edge shows offerings for the deity at the centre of the painting, and figures from his entourage.

1 Tshangpa Karpo

Engulfed in a sea of flames, the sacred mountain is presented in typical garb for such paintings, riding his horse. The raised sword in his right hand, as well as his bow and quiver with arrows, emphasise his belligerent character.

Mongolia, 19th century; mineral colour on canvas

Hans Leder Coll.

2 Nyenchen Thanglha

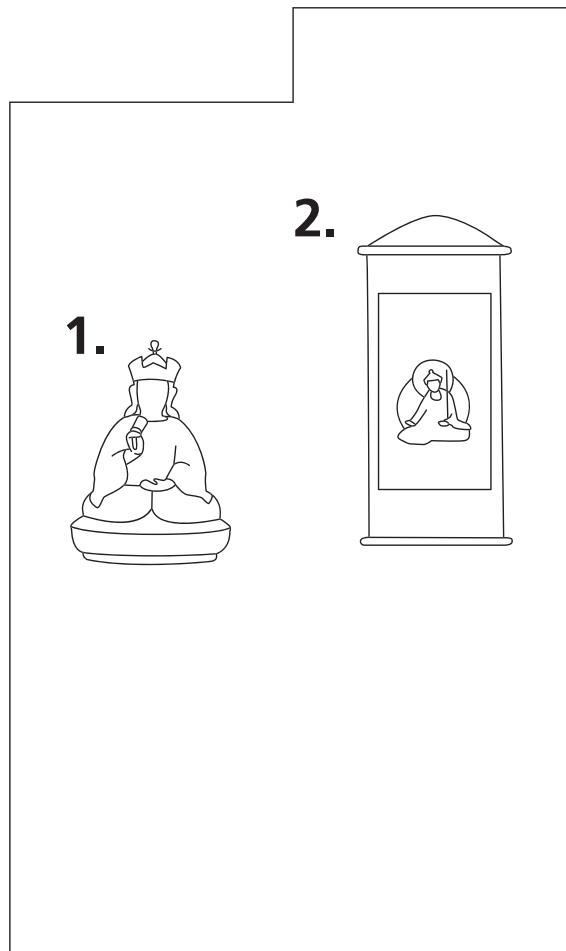
Nyenchen Thanglha is among the most popular sacred mountains in Tibet. He protects Mount Marpori in Lhasa, home of the Dalai Lama's Potala Palace, and dwells in one of its many temples. Portrayed above Nyenchen Thanglha, Guru Rinpoche subdued the god and bound him under oath to protect Buddhism.

Tibet, 19th century; mineral colour on canvas
René de Nebesky-Wojkowitz Coll.

2.

Guru Rinpoche

Guru Rinpoche, the Precious Master, grows up as the son of a king in India. Nevertheless, he leaves the royal court and dedicates his life to the salvation of all beings from earthly suffering. In the eighth century, Guru Rinpoche introduces the Himalayas to Indian Buddhism. He defeats the “old” gods including the sacred mountains in magical battles, as they stand in his and the new religion’s way. Instead of annihilating them, however, he compels them to protect both the people and Buddhism, thus granting them a place in the new religion. Guru Rinpoche creates a form of Buddhism that corresponds to the spiritual world of the mountain people and is, therefore, embraced without hesitation.



Many of his followers worship Guru Rinpoche like a second Buddha. His traces are found all over the Himalayas from his footprints on rocks to niches in rock walls he created by emitting heat in meditation.

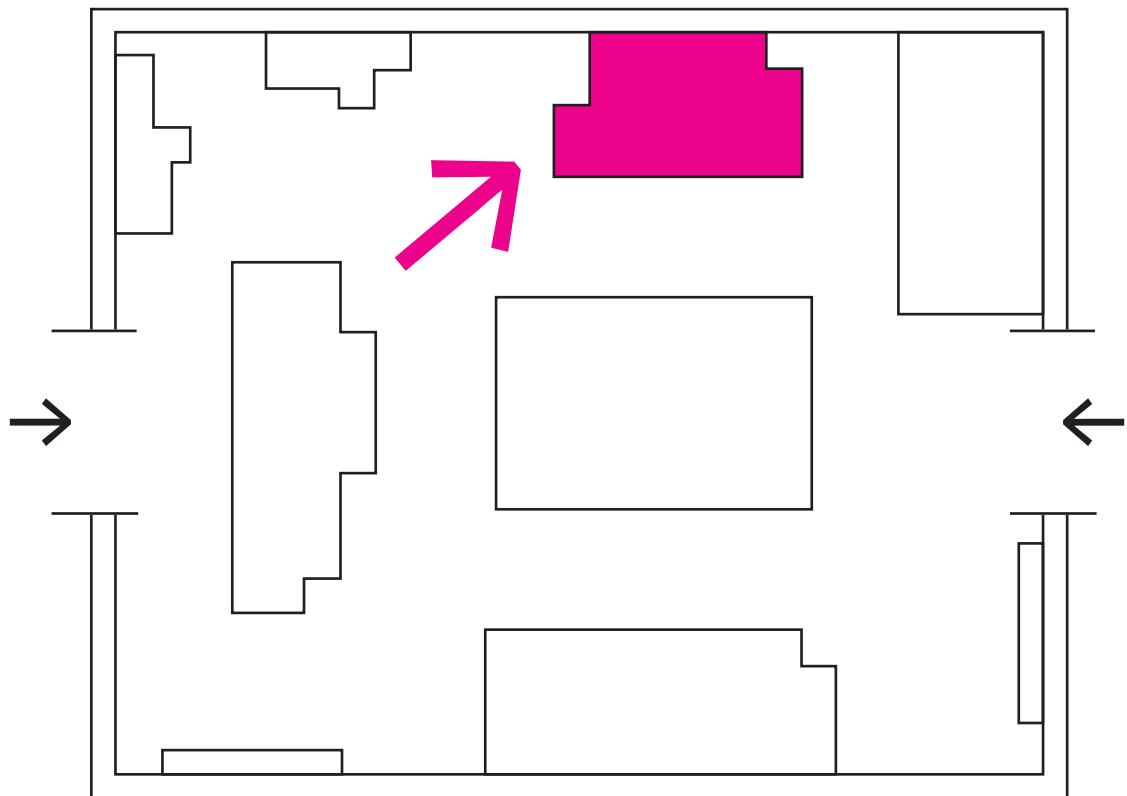
1 Guru Rinpoche

Nepal, 17th/18th century; copper
Khem Bahadur Gurung Coll.

2 Guru Rinpoche

Bhutan, 21st century; synthetics
Christian Schicklgruber Coll.

Room 25

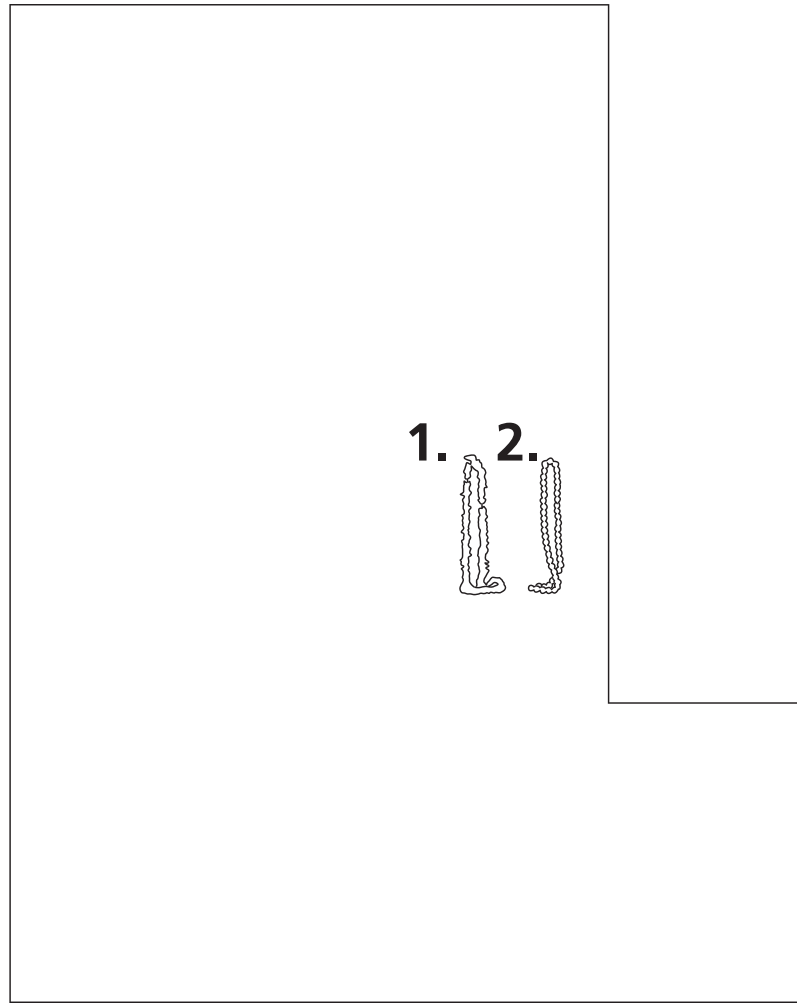


Solitude

For some people, living in a community is an obstacle to gaining insight into spiritual truths. For this reason, they retire to the seclusion of the mountains, far away from any village, and leave behind the everyday world with all its complications.

Many legends are dedicated to saints and gods meditating in the mountains. Those searching for meaning follow in their footsteps: some spend years in caves, others in huts built just for them. These places, elevated far above daily life, create a counter-balance to society.

While saints and gods live in complete solitude, others are provided with food from the valleys or occasionally return to lower altitudes, and thus lower spheres.



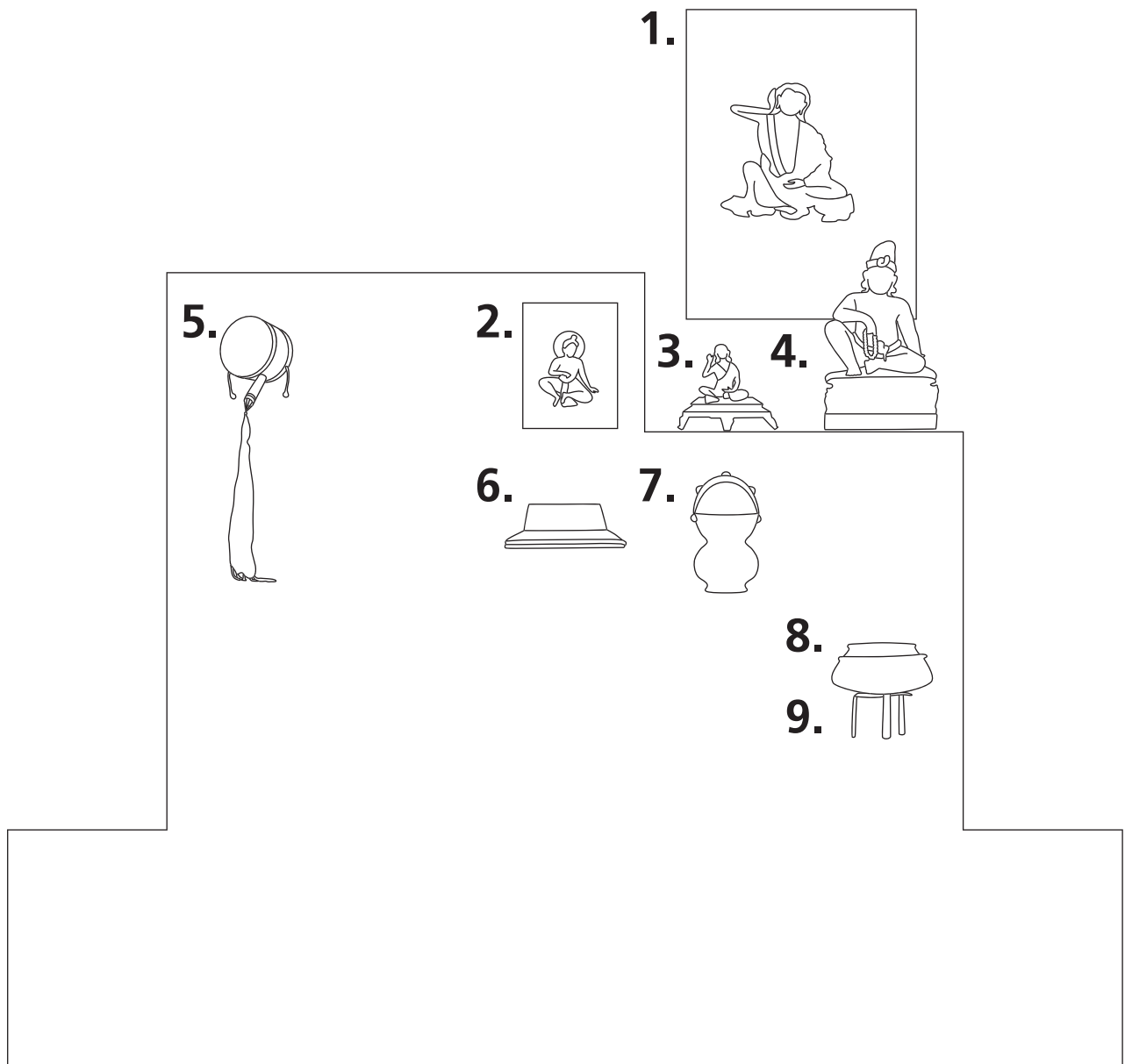
The way such prayer beads pass through the fingers of those reciting sacred scriptures or mantras is reminiscent of the function of Christian rosaries.

1 Prayer beads

Nepal, 20th century; snake vertebrae
René de Nebesky-Wojkowitz Coll.

2 Prayer beads

Nepal, 20th century; seed pods
René de Nebesky-Wojkowitz Coll.



Both Buddhists and Hindus worship gods and saints meditating in the solitude of the mountains. In Hinduism, the god Shiva is often depicted as withdrawn from the world and living an ascetic life in the Himalayas, while the Buddhist role model for attaining spiritual knowledge is Milarepa.

1 Milarepa

Bhutan, 21st century; plastic
Christian Schicklgruber Coll.

2 Shiva

India, 18th century; paper
L. Gstettner Coll.

3 Milarepa

Nepal, 21st century; bronze
Glinther Jontes Coll., donation

4 Shiva

India, 19th century; alabaster
Franz Ferdinand of Austria-Este Coll.

Giving alms establishes a connection between the lay population and those who have dedicated their life to the search for spiritual knowledge by showing respect for them and their world. Almsgivers consider this to be a noble deed ensuring good karma.

5 Alms bowl

India, 20th century; copper
Joachim Brenner Coll.

The continuous handling of ritual objects assists in meditation; solitude is conducive to studying sacred texts.

6 Sacred text

Nepal or Sikkim, 20th century; paper
René de Nebesky-Wojkowitz Coll.

7 Double-sided drum

Tibet, 19th century; wood, leather, textile
Sofie Deutsch Coll.

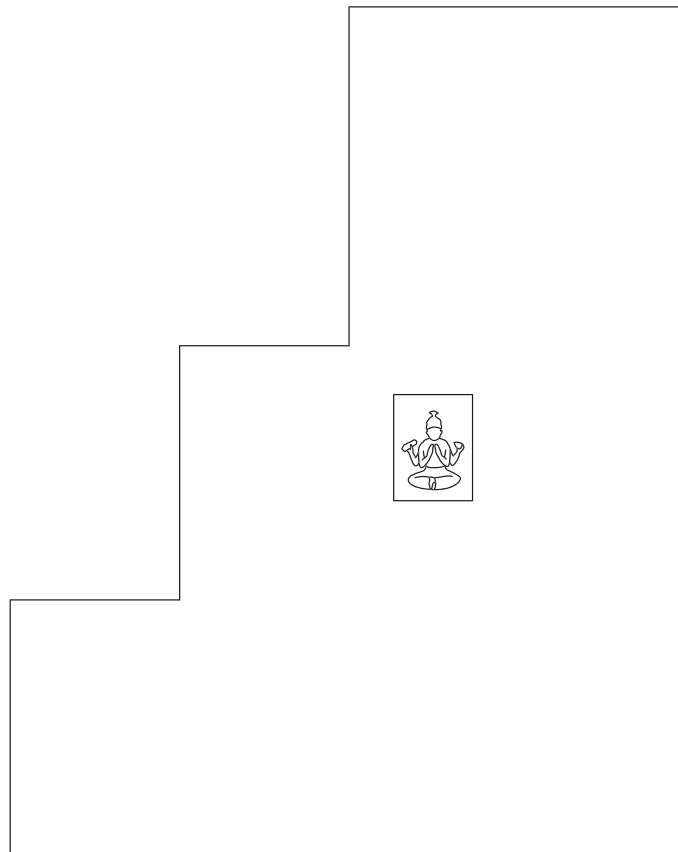
Milarepa subsisted on wild stinging nettles for such a long time that his skin took on a greenish tinge. Today people going into retreat are supplied with food from a monastery or village.

8 Pot

Ladakh, 20th century; stone
John D. Marshall Coll., donation

9 Tripod

Nepal, 20th century; iron
René de Nebesky-Wojkowitz Coll.

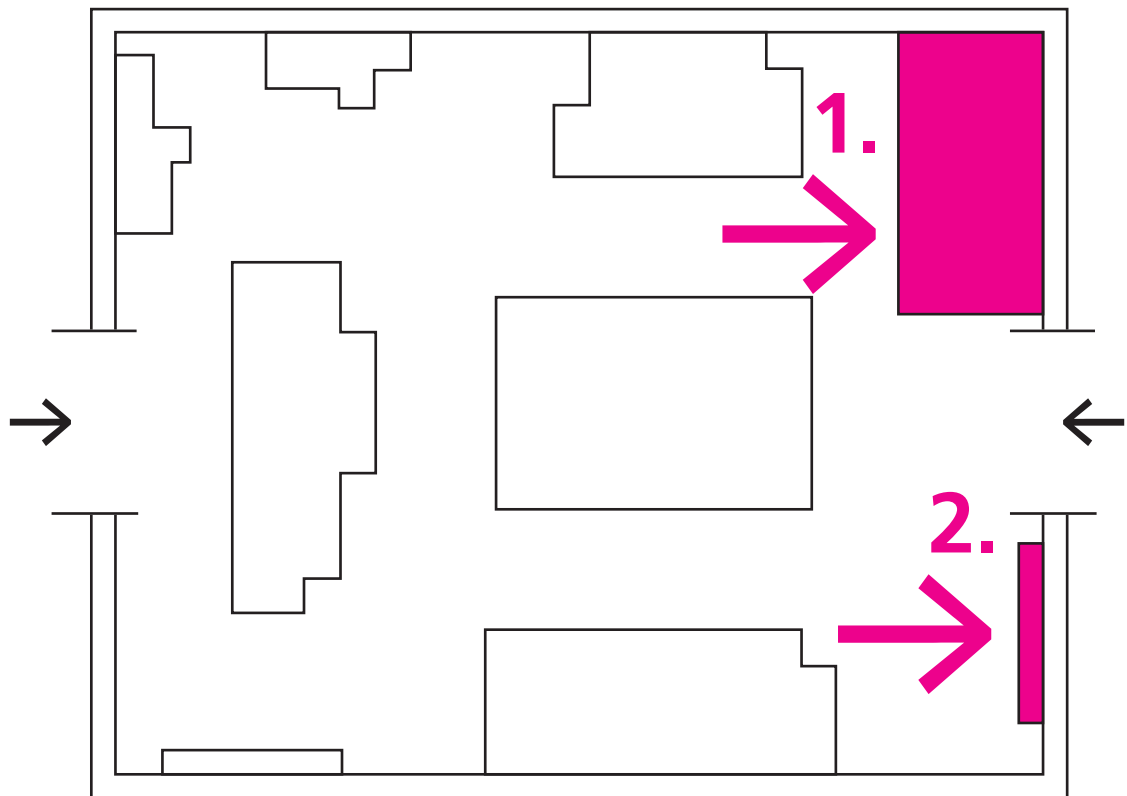


Withdrawn from the world, the meditating ascetic is a symbol of enlightenment. Here he becomes one with his innermost being. In this depiction, Vishnu welcomes two of his devotees to his site of meditation in the mountains.

Vishnu

India, 19th century; paper
Anton Gebauer Coll.

Room 25

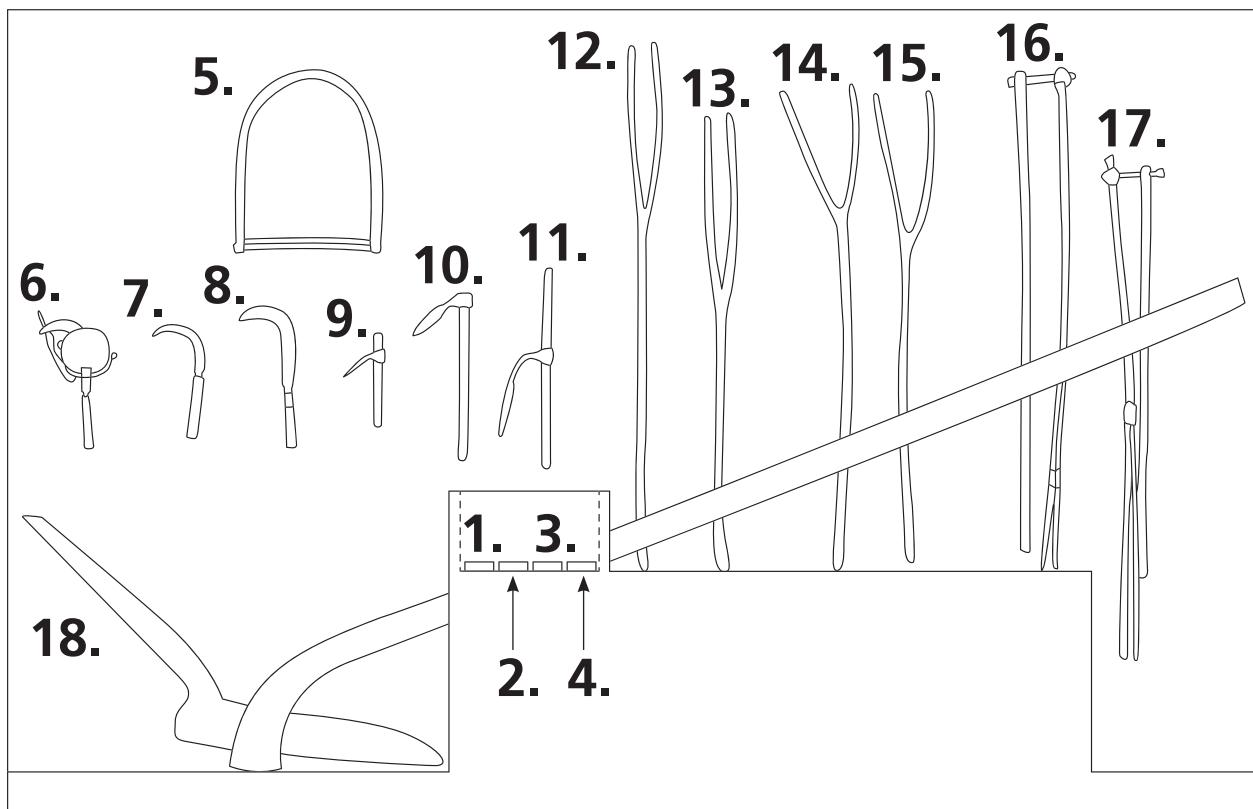


1.

Fields

Each and every piece of land is owned by gods who dwell in the ground. They share their world with us humans. Nevertheless, working in the fields may cause them to withhold their godly grace. This disturbed relationship may only be remedied by regularly offering sacrifice to the gods.

Men and women share most of the fieldwork such as sowing, weeding and harvesting. The hard and exhausting task of ploughing the fields with oxen as well as operating any agricultural machinery is usually the domain of men, though. In some Himalayan regions, daughters inherit the land from their mothers, which also grants them a special status in all village matters. Apart from that, decisions in the family are made depending on the individual personalities of husband and wife.



Each piece of land may harbour a supernatural being of often terrifying appearance. As these beings ensure the fertility of the fields, peaceful coexistence is essential — even though any agricultural activity might disturb them.

1-4

Devotional image

Mongolia, 19th century; paper

Hans Leder Coll.

If the threshed grain falls over the edge of a winnowing plate, the wind separates the lighter chaff from the heavier grains.

5 Wincnowing plate

Bhutan, 20th century; bamboo
Christian Schicklgruber Coll.

6, 8

Sickle

Nepal, 20th century; wood, iron
András Höfer Coll.

7 Sickle

Bhutan, 20th century; wood, iron
Christian Schicklgruber Coll.

9-11

Hoe

Nepal, 20th century; wood, iron
András Höfer Coll.

Several people usually work together when threshing the grain; songs often dictate the common rhythm.

12-15

Threshing fork

Bhutan, 20th century; wood
Christian Schicklgruber Coll.

16, 17

Flail

Bhutan, 20th century; wood, leather

Christian Schicklgruber Coll.

The terraced fields that are cut into steep slopes are often too narrow for agricultural machines to be turned around. Here, oxen are still used to pull the ploughs. Yet even in the valleys, yokes and ploughs are still in use.

18 Plough and yoke

Bhutan, 20th century; wood, iron, leather

Christian Schicklgruber Coll.

2.

Counterworld

In Nepal, many young people, mostly male, see no future for themselves and their families in the life that is represented in this exhibition gallery. Hundreds of thousands hire themselves out as construction workers in Malaysia and the Gulf States, frequently under the most hazardous conditions. Every day some of them return to their home country in wooden coffins.

The Nepalese artist Hit Man Gurung has addressed this subject in his work. A mother holds her son's coffin in a pose reminiscent of the Pietà. The large number of small portrait photographs originate from the passports of workers killed in accidents. These individuals can no longer support themselves, their families or their country.

**I have to Feed Myself, My Family and My
Country 1**

Hit Man Gurung

Nepal 2013; acrylic paint, synthetic resin,
fibreglass, canvas

Donation for the exhibition by John D. Marshall

