



# AGING IN PLACE IN AN AGE OF MIGRATION: VIEWS FROM THE HIMALAYAN HIGHLANDS

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**Departmental Seminar with Professor Geoff Childs**  
**Dept. of Anthropology, Washington University in St. Louis**

TIME: 13 March 2024, 14.15-16.00  
PLACE: Moesgaard Aud. 1, Room 4206/117  
(or join us on [Zoom](#))



## Abstract

Demographic trends are presenting novel challenges for Himalayan elders who seek to approach the end of life in their natal landscapes. Declining fertility, increasing longevity, and the high propensity for young people to move to cities is accelerating population aging while diminishing family-based networks of care for the elderly. This talk presents data and perspectives from a new study on aging in ethnically Tibetan, Buddhist enclaves of highland Nepal with a focus on Nubri, a valley where Childs has been conducting research since 1995. The objectives are to interrogate the gerontological constructs 'successful aging' and 'aging in place' through the lens of Buddhist highlanders' approaches to aging and dying. Research foci include challenges elders face when aging in places imbued with cultural meanings and social relationships yet depleted of potential caregivers by outmigration, the role of religious institutions and practices in supporting elders, how a combination of indigenous and outside institutions is arising to fill gaps in care, and how elderly migrants and their family members are adapting their cultural notions of care in new socio-economic contexts.

## Bio

Geoff Childs, Professor of Anthropology at Washington University in St. Louis, studies the intertwined social and demographic dimensions of fertility, mortality, migration, and aging. Side interests include the historical demography of Tibetan societies, and collaborative research with human biologists on high altitude's effects on fertility, mother's milk, and childhood development. He is the author of *Tibetan Diary: From Birth to Death and Beyond in a Himalayan Valley of Nepal* (2004, University of California Press), *Tibetan Transitions: Historical and Contemporary Perspectives on Fertility, Family Planning, and Demographic Change* (2008, Brill), and *From a Trickle to a Torrent: Education, Migration, and Social Change in a Himalayan Valley of Nepal*/co-authored with Namgyal Choedup (2019, University of California Press)



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