

Universität Innsbruck
Institut für Archäologien
Fachbereich Ur- und Frühgeschichte
sowie Mittelalter- und Neuzeitarchäologie

**Einladung
zum Vortrag von:**

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**Donnerstag, 21. Januar 2010,
18.15 Uhr**

Atrium, Langer Weg 11
Seminarraum 1



Social and technological aspects of mining, smelting and casting copper - an ethnoarchaeological study from Nepal

This lecture is based on ethnoarchaeological studies in the mid 1990's, where the process of mining and smelting copper was observed and recorded. In the remote areas of Western Nepal people who belong to the Untouchables, being smiths (Kami), still perform occasional mining and smelting of copper. Fairly simple tools undertake both processes, similar to descriptions from India in the 19th and early 20th century. Further a study among the Newars in Pathan in the Kathmandu valley will be presented where copper objects were casted by the lost-wax method (*cire perdue*).

The lecture starts with a brief presentation of Nepal, its history and social setting. Particularly the latter is significant as it structures to a large degree who can do what kind of work, and how tradition and technological knowledge is kept within the family. This is followed by a brief discussion on ethnoarchaeology and the methods used at the time of documentation. The main emphasis will be on the two different contexts of mining and smelting copper in the rural areas on one side, and the specialised casting in an urban context on the other. Here technological as well as social aspects are discussed. The latter are particularly in order to understand the social status of the smiths within different social organisations. In addition references are made to religion and the use of space. Lastly, some broader lines are drawn in connection with smiths in general, the role of metal and technological issues with both has implications for the Indian subcontinent as well as for a better understanding of the setting of technologies during the European Bronze Age.