

Abteilung für Asiatische und Islamische Kunstgeschichte WS 2025/26:

Vortrag von Richard Blurton
(Zuvor Leiter der Süd- und Südostasienabteilung
(im Ruhestand), British Museum)

Krishna in the Garden of Assam.

Montag, 03.11.2025, Beginn: 18.15 Uhr

Ausschließlich online via Zoom:

<https://uni-bonn.zoom-x.de/j/61556256731?pwd=03ryEyvleRTgtZGMFkcpnA3TgHSgyE.1>

This paper has its origins in a research project, an exhibition and a book, all from the British Museum. These three elements were built around a remarkable textile item in the Museum's collection that is from Assam. It is over 9.00m in length and is made up of twelve different strips of cloth now stitched together. These cloths are all figured and reflect the distinctive Vaisnava culture of Assam that derived from the teaching of the *bhakti* saint, Shankaradeva (died 1568). The cloths are figured and also contain text, woven using the sophisticated *lampas technique*. They were once all separate, and their assembly today, stitched together, is testament to a period when they were used in Tibet, before being acquired by a British journalist, Perceval Landon, who was accredited to the



Younghusband Expedition to Lhasa (1903-04). Landon wrote reports for *The Times* (of London) and the year following the return of the expedition from Lhasa he both wrote a memoir of his visit to Lhasa (it is unusual for its positive appreciation of Tibetan art) and had given the textile to the British Museum where it remained, unknown, and of course labelled 'Tibetan' (it had been found in Tibet) until discovered by curators from the V&A and displayed by me in 1993. It has since been exhibited twice, and is about to be shown in India.

My paper will explore the three 'lives' of this outstanding textile item - in Assam, in Tibet and in London. It will also consider the original function for these strips of cloth and - if there is time - their connection with liturgy and religious dance and drama.