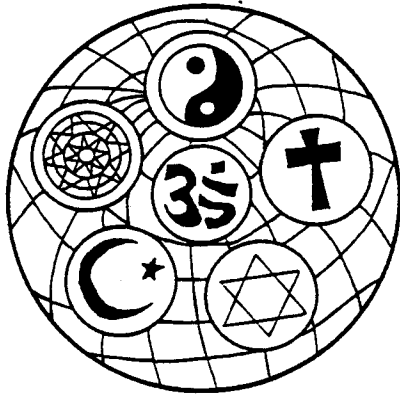


Geography of Religions & Belief Systems



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EDITOR'S NOTE

GOOD News! The GORABS Specialty Group of the AAG is continuing to grow in membership. Yet, we should not sit back and relax. If you know anyone who is interested in GORABS, but he or she does not know very much about us, then drop me or our guest editor (see inside) a line and we will send them a complimentary copy of our newsletter. Also, all GORABS members should continue sending material for the newsletter. I am happy to report that we have feature essays for each of our three issues this academic year. Please do not let that dissuade you though. Write a synopsis of your thesis or consider writing a thousand word essay on an issue you think is central to our work. Finally, you must have a map or research material that you would like to share with us in the newsletter format, don't you??!! Then put it together and send it to me for next year's issues. I look forward to hearing from you.

FUNDING FOR THIS NEWSLETTER IS MADE POSSIBLE BY THE DEAN OF THE COLLEGE OF ARTS AND SCIENCES AT SLIPPERY ROCK UNIVERSITY

GORABS Feature Essay

The following essay entitled GRAVESTONELANDSCAPE EVOLUTION OF A JAPANESE RURAL COMMUNITY is offered to us by Tadashi Nakagawa, Institute of Geoscience, University of Tsukuba, Ibaraki 305, Japan. This is a condensed version of the paper Tadashi published in the Geographical Bulletin 34:2:82-90. Reprinted with permission.

This study investigates the gravestones of four cemeteries in Hagane-Omaguchi community of Nagasu, Iwaishi, Ibaraki Prefecture, as a part of an intensive community study project (Yamamoto et al. 1990). Houses of Hagane-Omaguchi occupy a fluvial terrace on the left bank of the Tone River, 50 km northeast of Tokyo (Figure 1). The 1988 agricultural census of Ibaraki indicates that 43 of 58 households were engaged in farming. Since 1960, the community has rapidly expanded lettuce and onion cultivation to form one of the leading vegetable production regions in the greater Tokyo area. Although agriculture has been commercialized, the lifestyle and cultural landscape still have a conservative and rural character.

Four cemeteries in the settlement contain the

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Feature Essay

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graves of 41 of the 58 households. The largest cemetery has 59 gravestones of 21 households in 240 square meters of land, while the smallest one has nine graves of three households in 50 square meters of land. Eight gravestones were erected in the 17th century, 10 in the 18th century, 22 in the 19th century, and 59 were established in this century. Even if ephemeral markers may have dominated these cemeteries in the early period, no other landscape elements could demonstrate their evolutions precisely as these existing tombstones.

The cemetery landscape reflects some characteristics of the Buddhist denomination, Jodo-Shinshu (the True Sect of Pure Land). Contrary to other denominations, people do not install stupas on the burial ground. Buddhist names inscribed on tombstones also have unique Jodo-Shinshu styles. Except for these elements, however, forms of the gravestones are similar to those of other cemeteries in the Kanto area.

Transformation of Gravestone Elements

A typical grave unit consists of a marker, bases, vases, a water holder, and an incense burner (Figure 2). While all graves have markers, other elements are options which were rare in the early period. Design of the marker as well as the presence of the options show some temporal patterns.

The design of markers are categorized into four styles with some variations (Figure 3). The Itabi style marker is a pointed monument with a rectangular depression on its front. A variation of the Itabi style has three pointed arches with two rectangular depressions. The tablet style terminates in a rounded arch and has projected edges on its front. The block marker is an oblong block with a flat top. A variation of the block marker has a top that is either slightly pointed or rounded. The western style marker is a tabular wide block.

Style by date of occurrence indicates that the

Itabi style markers were commonly installed in the 17th and the 18th century, while the tablet markers appeared in the 18th and the 19th century. While the block markers first appeared in the late 18th century, they have been dominant since the late 19th century. Except for one western style marker, all tombstones established in the 20th century are the block style.

The number of bases a grave has also differs through time. All but two graves have at least one base. Until the early 19th century, almost all graves have had one base. Graves with two bases first appeared in the 1830s, while those with three bases were introduced in the 1880s. In the 20th century, graves with three bases became dominant, and all but one western style grave established since 1960 have three bases.

Vases for flower decoration include ephemeral plastic or bamboo vases and permanent stone vases. While ephemeral vases do not necessarily originate in the period of the establishment

of the graves, almost all stone vases were installed with other elements of grave structure. Stone vases, first appearing in the 1930s, became common grave-design elements in the 1960s. All graves established since the 1970s have stone vases.

Water holders first appeared in 1892, they began to increase in the 1920s and became dominant in the 1960s. All graves established in the 1980s have water holders.

Although the oldest incense burner appeared in the 1840s, it was

See Page 3

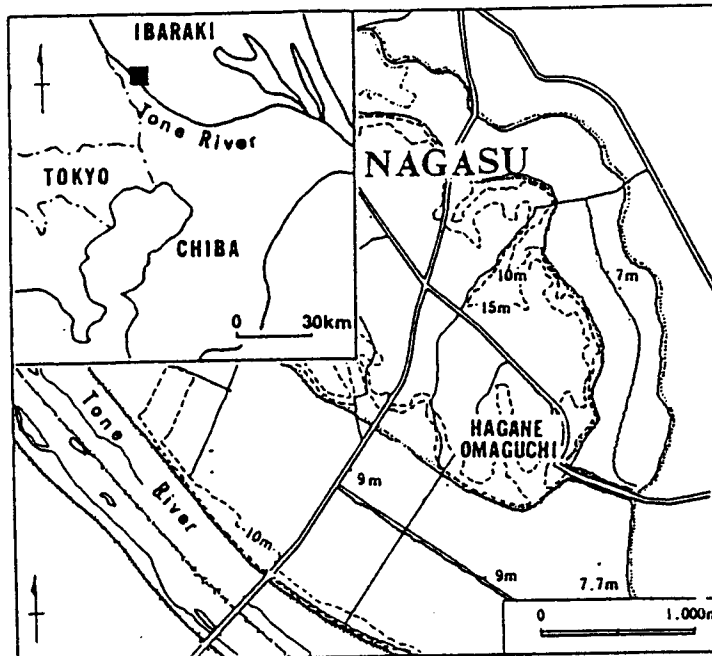


Figure 1: Location of Hagane-Omaguchi community

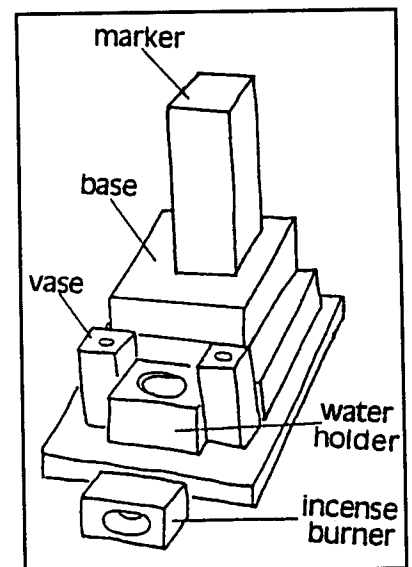


Figure 2: Gravestone elements

Feature Essay

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probably a later addition to the grave. The first incense burner may well have originated in the 1920s. Like water holders, the installation of incense burners has been a recent innovation which became popular, especially over the past 40 years. Among 23 graves established since 1960 for example, 20 graves have incense burners.

Chronological patterns are also identifiable in the letters inscribed on the tombstones. The inscriptions can be classified into three categories: 1) Buddhist names of the deceased; 2) letters representing the family rather than individual persons, such as "the grave of the Masuda family"; and 3) others, which include a prayer to Amida Buddha. Until the 1950s, the most common inscription was the Buddhist name of the deceased. Since the 1960s, however, no such grave markers have been established. Instead, the inscriptions of family emphasis became dominant. The rapid shift from earthen burial to cremation in this period may have contributed to the change in symbolic meaning.

GRAVESTONE LANDSCAPE EVOLUTION

As the changes of these elements took place fairly simultaneously, we can reconstruct typical gravestone landscapes for several periods. Based upon the patterns of the landscape change, four stages of evolution are established along Japanese eras:

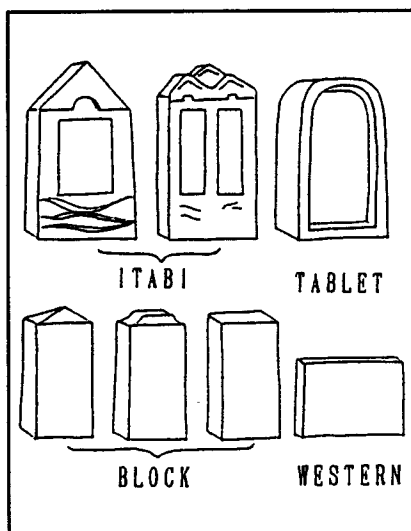


Figure 3: Grave marker styles

1) the feudal period until 1867; 2) the Meiji-Taisho period between 1868 and 1912; 3) the early Showa period between 1913 and 1959; and 4) the period of rapid economic growth since 1960.

Although we cannot determine how common the use of stone markers in the feudal period was from

the present landscape, we can at least assume that a typical grave with a stone marker in that period consisted of one base and an Itabi or a tablet style marker. It did not have stone vases, water holders, or incense burners. Buddhist names of the deceased were inscribed on the tombstone.

In the Meiji-Taisho period, the majority of newly established tombstone became block styles. The

Like water holders, the installation of incense burners has been a recent innovation which became popular, especially over the past 40 years.

number of bases were increased to two or three. However, such options as vases, water holders, and incense burners were still few.

The early Showa period is

characterized by three bases under a marker and by a gradual increase in vases, water holders, and incense burners. Until the end of this period, all deceased persons were buried beneath the ground and the markers with their Buddhist names were placed on top of the burial site.

During the rapid economic growth period of the 1960s, however, cremation gradually became dominant. As a result, graves became common symbols of families. The cremated ashes of the deceased were placed in an urn to provide a monument for future generations. People, therefore, viewed the markers as the graves for future family members. The increase in income and standardization of graves are reflected in the landscape; almost all graves have a set of a marker, three bases, vases, a water holder, and an incense burner.

CONCLUSION

This study identifies some correlations between tombstone landscape and changes in the community or the Japanese society at large. The inscriptions, the number of bases and such other options as vases, water holders, and incense burners reflect the changing form of interment as well as the growing income of the residents. If we can further identify more specifically what these changes reflect, gravestone studies will be an exciting technique to unravelling problems in settlement geography.

SELECTED REFERENCE

Yamamoto, S. et al., 1990 "Urbanization of a Village on the Outer Suburban Tokyo. *Area Research*, 12:47-100 (in Japanese).

NEW THESES

The following list of theses was culled from the 94-95 and 95-96 Guide to Programs in Geography in the United States and Canada, by the AAG.

Baldus, B. "Maya and Spanish at the Conquest: A Meeting of Two Spiritual Geographies," M. Paper, University of Minnesota.

Cadwallader, D.S. "The Istrouma Baptist Church: How One Congregation Adapted to Demographic Change and the Effects of the Change," M. Thesis, Louisiana State University.

Cathcart, G.L. "Religious Beliefs as Cultural Values: Mormon Cattle Ranchers in Arizona's Little Colorado River Valley," M. Thesis, Arizona State University.

Clark, M.A. "Saint Mary's Mission, 1861-1900," M. Thesis, University of British Columbia.

Edwards, M. "The Cultural Diffusion of Christianity and the Distance-Decay of its Jewish Attributes: A Study in Religious Geography," a paper, University of Missouri.

Golden, G. "Each Within His Narrow Cell Forever Laid: An Investigation into the Evolution of the American Cemetery within the Central Connecticut Region," M. Thesis, Central Connecticut State University.

Hanks, R.R. "Glasnost and Islam in Uzbekistan," PhD, University of Kansas.

Jurkovich, J.M. "Medjugorje as a Healing Place: A Modern Cultural Geography Analysis," M. Thesis, U. of North Carolina, Chapel Hill.

Lalonde, R.L. "Geographical, Religious, and Philosophical Thought: Following the High Road and Finding Common Ground in Environmental Ethics," M. Thesis, Carleton University.

Lindemuth, J.F. "Forms of Worship among a Charismatic Congregation," M. Thesis, Louisiana State University.

Lucchese, K.M. "The 'Apotheosis of the Tree or The Place of Sacred Tree and Grove in the Symbolic Landscape of the Pagan Sanctuary,'" M. Thesis, University of Texas, A & M.

Metz, D.J. "Jewish Neighborhood Change in Chicago: 1838-1994," M. Thesis, Indiana University.

Mills, C.I. "The Social Geography of New Age Spirituality in Vancouver," M. Thesis, University of British Columbia.

Nagar, R. "Making and Breaking Boundaries: Identity Politics Among South Asians in Postcolonial Dar es Salaam," PhD, University of Minnesota.

Nippert, D.J. "Agricultural Colonization: The Mennonites of Upper Barton Creek, Belize," M. Thesis, University of Memphis.

Purcell, M. "Egypt's Copts: Contested Creations of Place in the Struggle for Survival," M. Thesis, University of California, LA.

Ripmeester, M.R. "Vision Quests into Sight Lines: Negotiating Landscapes in South Eastern Ontario, 1700-1876," PhD., Queens University.

Samson, C.M. "Who is My Hermano?: The Word of God and Protestant Communal Identity in the Mexican Huasteca Potosina," M. Thesis, Louisiana State University.

Tillman, B.F. "Spatial Succession of Sacred Space: A Study of Changing Occupants of Religious Structures," M. Thesis, Brigham Young University.

Trott, R.J. "Religious Participation and Demographic Change: A Study of the Unchurched in America," M. Thesis, University of Connecticut.

Vasile, E.A. "The Greening of Tunis: Ghettoization and the Prosaics of Piety," Phd., University of California, Berkeley

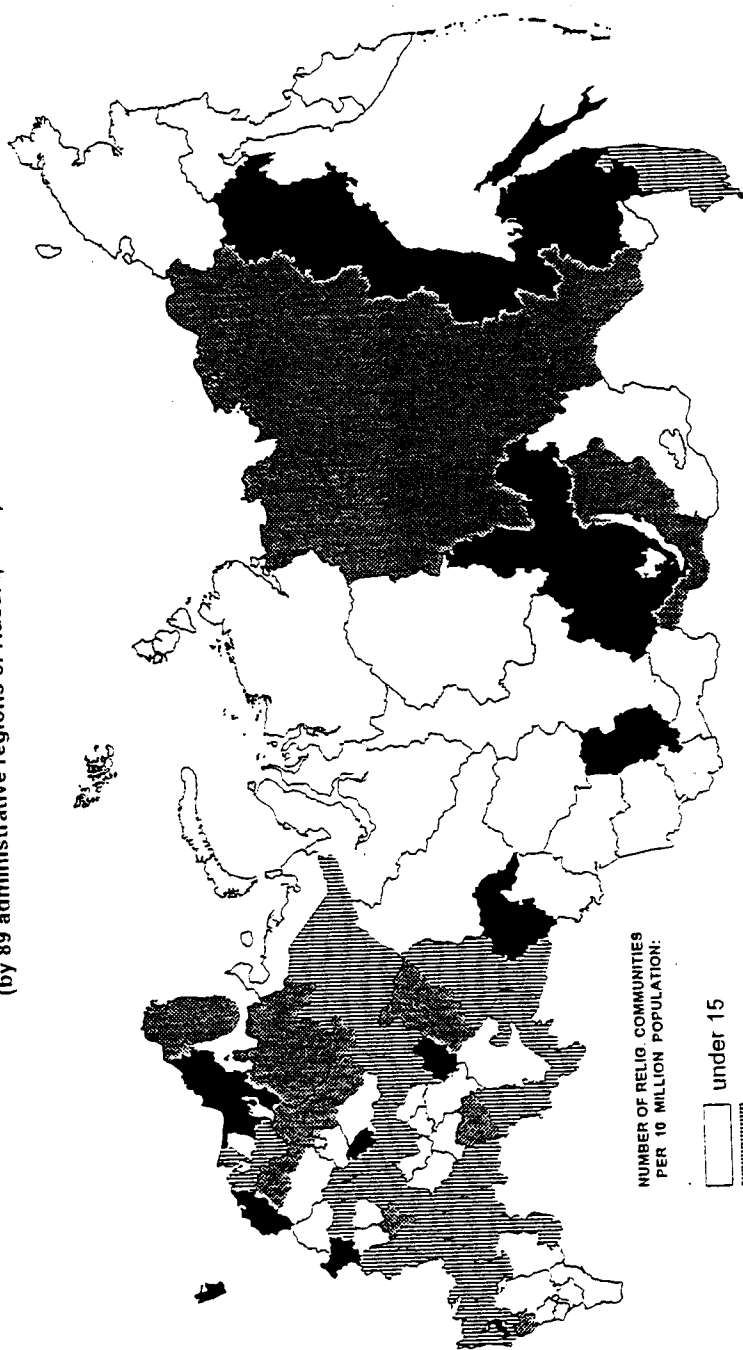
Wallace, S.C. "An Historical Geography of the United Church of Christ: 1890-1990," M. Thesis, University of Kansas.

Worley, B. "The Russell Creek Mennonite Community in Western Tennessee: Historical Settlement and Contemporary Land Use," M. Thesis, University of Memphis.

York, S. "A Geographical Analysis of the College Hill Cemetery, Lebanon, Illinois," M. Thesis, Southern Illinois University at Edwardsville.



PENTECOSTAL CHURCHES
 number of religious communities (places of regular worship)
 per 10 million population.
 (by 89 administrative regions of Russia, 1995)



NUMBER OF RELIG. COMMUNITIES
 PER 10 MILLION POPULATION:

- under 15
- 15 - 39
- 40 - 59
- over 60

(average number for Russia - 29)

Source of data : Local (regional) executive bodies of state administration.

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 (Institute of Geography, Moscow, Russia)

they seek to fill the religious vacuum deriving from the lack of the Russian Orthodox Church's activity in northern Russia, Siberia and the Far East.

Slavic Protestantism includes those who have engaged in particularly energetic missionary work over the last five years. Their geographical distribution is inversely proportional to the geography of the Russian Orthodox Church, in that

VISITING SCHOLAR

Alexei C. Krindatch, from the Institute of Geography, Russian Academy of Sciences in Moscow, is presently a visiting professor at Columbia University. He has recently produced a number of papers on religious minorities and the creation of new religious spaces in post-Soviet

Russia. Alexei has kindly shared one of his maps with us and would look forward to hearing from interested scholars at the following address: Center for the Study of Human Rights, 1108 Internal Affairs Building, Columbia University, NY NY 10027; 212-854-2479.

GORABS ELECTIONS

Two executive board positions are open for two-year terms. Nominate yourself or a colleague by contacting Carol Prorok before December 15, 1995. This is a wonderful opportunity to serve your scholarly community through the specialty group. Don't pass it up!

ANNOUNCEMENTS

From the Editor's Desk:

Adrian Cooper announces his most recent publication, "Adolescent dilemmas of landscape, place, and religious experience in a Suffolk Parish," in Environment and Planning D: Society and Space, 1995:13:349-363. Also, Adrian continues to produce new radio programs on sacred mountains for the BBC.

Repeated, therefore important, announcement
The editor asks long time GORABS aficionados to look into their files for the early newsletters that were produced before the present organization began publishing in 1989. Please send photocopies (or originals) for our archives. No one has responded yet, so I am waiting with bated breath!

Rana P.B. Singh, Banaras Hindu University and Carol Prorok, Slippery Rock University worked together in the field this past summer. We visited a number of rural temples and temple gardens along the Gaghara River in the Bhojpur district (situated between Varanasi and Patna) of India.

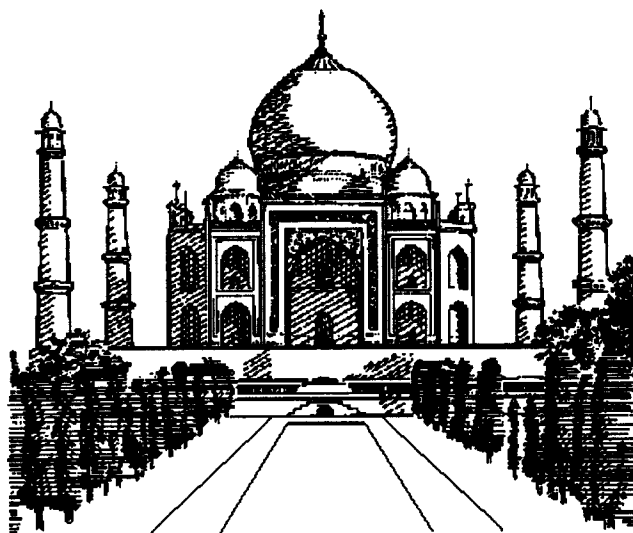
The Pittsburgh History and Landmarks Foundation reports that renovations are complete at five religious properties in Pittsburgh. This work resulted from a grant by the Allegheny Foundation that focused on the need to preserve historic religious properties. If your community is working on such preservation projects, please report on them.

CALL FOR PAPERS

The Pennsylvania Geographer is a high-quality, refereed journal produced bi-annually by the PENNSYLVANIA GEOGRAPHICAL SOCIETY. A special volume devoted to the theme of GORABS is planned for 1997-8 with Carol Prorok as guest editor. Submissions will be refereed before being accepted for publication. Research on any GORABS subject is welcomed. Please contact Carol Prorok or Bill Kory (PG Editor, Geography Dept., University of Pittsburgh-Johnston, Johnston, PA 15904) if you are interested.

BOOK REVIEWS**BOOK REVIEWS** BOOK REVIEWS**BOOK REVIEWS**

Even though we are not able to provide review copies at this point, GORABS members are welcome to share reviews of books that are of interest to our readership. If we receive enough reviews, we can make the review section a regular feature. Please keep us in mind if you are reading a good book. Reviews need only be 300-500 words.

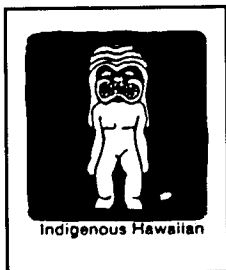


NOTICE: DAVID SOPHER AWARD

The David E. Sopher New Scholar Award will honor scholars for their outstanding contributions to the field of geography of religion. Award(s) will be given each year; one to a student and/or one to an untenured faculty member who presents a paper at an AAG national meeting (in any session). We reserve the right to not make an award in any given year. GORABS Board members are ineligible the year that they are serving the organization. Awardees will be honored at the AAG Awards luncheon with a certificate and cash prize of \$50. Deadline for application is April 1, 1996. If you are a student or untenured faculty, and you are presently preparing to give a paper in Charlotte--seriously consider applying for this award. For a list of criteria and the official application, write to Bob Stoddard, Department of Geography, University of Nebraska, Lincoln, NE 68588-0135.

GORABS FOCUS ON:**Robert Kuhlken**

Robert Kuhlken is assistant professor of geography at Central Washington University, Ellensburg, Washington, 98926 (kuhlkenr@cwu.edu). Bob recently completed his PhD at Louisiana State University in 1994. Nominated for a Warren Nystrom Award, his work focused on the Fijian agricultural system. Even though Bob sees himself primarily as a cultural ecologist, he has taken into account the role of religion and the creation of sacred landscapes in his work. For instance, his most recent publication, "Tuatua Ni Nakauvadra: A Fijian Irrigated Taro Agrosystem," in J. Morrison et al., eds. of Science of Pacific Island Peoples, Vol. 2:51-62, indicates that one of the largest areas of irrigated terracing in Fiji was established in a location believed to be the ancestral home of the Fijian people's supreme being, Degei. Bob is currently working on another paper regarding Fijian sacred landscapes. You can contact Bob at the above address.

**CHARLOTTE Meeting**

We will sponsor a special session of papers entitled: GEOGRAPHY OF RELIGIONS: PATTERNS AND PROBLEMS. Richard Jackson, Brigham Young University, will chair the session, and the following papers will be presented:

"Sharing Sacred Space: The Church of the Holy Sepulcher as a Model for Sharing Jerusalem", Chad Emmett, Department of Geography, Brigham Young University

"Creating Spiritual Landscapes and Places in a Vietnamese Community", Christopher Airriess, Department of Geography, Ball State University

"Religion and Necrogeography", Robert Stoddard, Department of Geography, University of Nebraska, Lincoln

"The Diffusion of the Moravian Church in the Mosquito Coast of Honduras", Benjamin Tillman, Department of Geography and Anthropology, Louisiana State University

"The New Gaustad Historical Atlas of Religion in America-A Preview", Philip Barlow, Department of Theological Studies, Hanover College

GUEST EDITOR

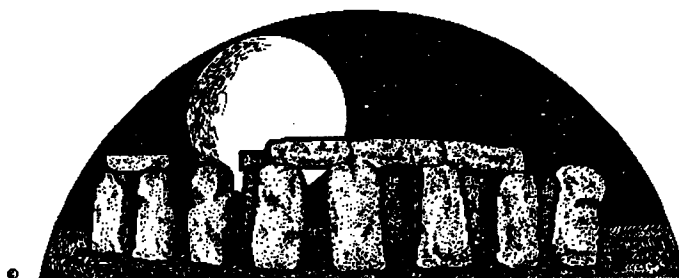
Bob Kuhlken, featured in this newsletter, will be the guest editor of the Spring 1997 issue of GORABS. Next semester, I will be participating in a teaching exchange program in Shanghai, China that is sponsored by my university. Send any announcements for the Spring issue to Bob up to early February 1997. I will prepare the Summer 1997 issue, although it will be late. Send announcements for the summer and fall issues of 1997 to me.

IGU Travel Grants

Officers of the International Geographical Union announce that \$30,000 is available from NSF and other sources to support travel to the next IGU Congress in Amsterdam, 1996. Grants (up to \$1500 each) are awarded based upon the quality of submissions in regard to any or all of the following criteria: scientific content, international collaboration, development of workshops, and contributions to the IGU itself. Young scholars and minorities are particularly encouraged to apply. Watch your AAG and AGS newsletters for application information which will be announced shortly.

IGU Religions Study Group

Gisbert Rinschede, University of Regensburg, Germany, reports that the IGU executive board has put a hold on the creation of new study groups or commissions. They do plan to create one commission for all cultural geographers, but a study group on religion is no longer feasible. He will keep us informed of any further developments.



GORABS BYLAWS

Article VIII: Annual Business Meeting
GORABS will hold at least one Business Meeting each year during the AAG national meeting. The Annual Business Meeting should include the following items: The approval of the minutes of the previous business meeting, a financial report by the Secretary-Treasurer, names of the new Board members, a report of the Board actions for the year, and a general discussion about the methods of achieving the Purposes of GORABS.

ADDRESS CHANGES
The editor appreciates notification of address changes as soon as they are known. From this point onward, any person's newsletter returned to due to change of address, will be eliminated from the mailing list immediately.

****GORABS NEWSLINE****

The editor is happy to include in GORABS any news about you or your program that would be of interest to our members. Please type or print legibly. Also, send your vita to the editor if you would like to let the rest of us know a little more about you.

- Name:
- Address:

- E-Mail:
- Telephone:
- Fax:
- Research in Progress:

- Recent Publications:

- Program Activities:

****GORABS NEWSLINE****



SLIPPERY ROCK UNIVERSITY

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