

22 June 2018

Dear Board of Trustees of the Society for Ethnographic Theory:

As members of the Tibetan studies community and practitioners of ethnographic fieldwork, we feel it is our responsibility to share with you, in confidence, some long-standing concerns that are consistent with the recent allegations regarding Giovanni da Col's treatment of HAU staff. We believe that our observations represent a troubling set of precedents that can shed additional light on your evaluation of Mr. da Col's pattern of professional behavior. We have either witnessed his interactions with Tibetans, or have encountered the aftermath of his broken relationships in the field. We are aware of several instances of unethical behavior, such as:

- On at least one occasion, da Col had signed contracts, against payment, forbidding potential interlocutors from speaking to any researcher other than himself. This was apparently done with the intent of monopolizing field data.
- On at least one occasion, da Col called one of his informants to warn him against speaking with a visiting Western researcher with whom he was in theory collaborating on a publishing project.
- da Col invited a key informant to his home country and used the trip to press for ethnographic data. Later, when the informant expressed a desire to cease working with him, da Col stated that he would have to pay back all airfare and expenses.

Such practices appear to us to be in violation of the basic ethical standards of anthropology and of ethnographic fieldwork. As far as we are aware, these were not isolated incidents. More importantly, that da Col should have acted in this way with members of a vulnerable minority is of great concern: we have moral obligations to these critical collaborators, and our actions as members of a professional community must reflect an ethical stance. To reiterate, we believe that our concerns regarding da Col's fieldwork practices are relevant to the current inquiry and hope that the members of the Board of Trustees of the SET take them into consideration.

[REDACTED], Researcher, [REDACTED]  
[REDACTED], Professor of [REDACTED]  
[REDACTED], Associate Professor, [REDACTED]  
[REDACTED], Professor of [REDACTED]  
and a Tibetan researcher who wishes to remain anonymous