



UNIVERSITY OF
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TIBETAN AND HIMALAYAN
STUDIES CENTRE

WOLFSON COLLEGE
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Narrating Locality: Ritual, Protector Deities, and the Production of Local Continuity in Tibetan Society

Galusangmu

Abstract

This talk explores how locality is continuously produced through ritual practices, oral traditions, and protector deity worship in Tibetan society. Drawing on ethnographic materials from Grib Tse Chok Ling (མཇིག་ཅེ་མཚོ་གཞིང་།), it examines how narratives surrounding local deities, Guandi worship, Gesar traditions, and ritual movement are repeatedly reinterpreted to explain local history, articulate collective identity, and organize relationships between local society and broader political-religious orders.

Rather than treating the “local” and the “center” as fixed oppositions, this presentation focuses on how both are continually constituted through shared symbolic systems. Oral traditions and ritual performances are approached not as static remnants of the past, but as active historical practices through which local communities repeatedly reinterpret who they are and how they relate to wider historical and religious imaginaries. Through recurring narrative structures, ritual circulation, and the continual reinterpretation of protector deities, locality emerges as an ongoing relational process shaped through negotiation between local society and larger centers of authority.

Speaker

Galusangmu (དགའ་སྐྱེ་བཟང་མོ།) is a Visiting Doctoral Student at the Faculty of Asian and Middle Eastern Studies, University of Oxford, and a PhD candidate in Anthropology at Minzu University of China. Her doctoral research is based on ethnographic research in Grib Tse Chok Ling, Lhasa. Her research interests include Tibetan studies, the study of Tibetan art, and the anthropology of Tibetan societies.

5PM – 6PM
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Seminar Room 2
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