

Khyentse Center Guest Lecture Series

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16:00

ESA-Ost, Room 120

Dr. Pascale Hugon

(Austrian Academy of Sciences, Institute for the Cultural and Intellectual History of Asia,
pascale.hugon@oeaw.ac.at)

Filling the Gaps in the Early Tibetan Scholastic Corpus

The mapping of the early Tibetan scholastic corpus and, more broadly, of the treatises composed, taught and learned by scholars engaged in scholastic activities in the 11th to 13th centuries, faces multiple challenges. The first issue is that the pool of surviving works is fragmentary, as only a portion of what was composed was preserved, and only a fraction of that is accessible. In addition, the identification of works in sources such as biographies, bibliographies and narratives about processes of composition, teaching and learning is often hampered by the imprecision inherent in these narratives. For example, instead of naming a specific work, such sources will refer to “a treatise of textual tradition *x*”; the same work may be referred to by different descriptions, titles, and nicknames and, conversely, the same title may be applied to different works. Furthermore, the frequent “and so on” (*la sogs pa*) concluding lists of texts – or even the complete omission of texts from the list by the narrators, whether due to limited knowledge or some other reason – obscures an important part of the picture. Relying solely on what is extant and what is explicit in narratives can lead to an inaccurate representation of the scholarly endeavors of the time.

In this talk, I will present the progress made in mapping the early Tibetan scholastic corpus in the TibSchol project (“The Dawn of Tibetan Buddhist Scholasticism [11th-13th c.]” ERC CoG 101001002). I will outline the strategies used to expand the corpus to include works that are lost or inaccessible and will discuss recent discoveries, particularly among the manuscript fragments recovered from the stupas at Matho (Mang spro) in Ladakh. I will show what additional light the growing data set can shed on the significance of particular texts and textual traditions in the period under

consideration, on the study paths of individuals, and the range of their specialized learning, and I will also point out the limitations of drawing firm conclusions.

Prof. Dr. Dorji Wangchuk (Director) & Dr. Orna Almogi (Co-director)
Khyentse Center for Tibetan Buddhist Textual Scholarship (KC-TBTS)
Abteilung für Kultur und Geschichte Indiens und Tibets, AAI, Universität Hamburg
Alsterterrasse 1, D-20354 Hamburg