

Khyentse Center Guest Lecture Series

25.06.2025
16:00 Uhr
ESA-OST, Raum 120

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In Search of Jo btsun: The Lost Philosophical Ideas of Khyung Rin chen grags Found in Tibetan and Tangut Sources

Khyung Rin chen grags (late 11th to early 12th century) was a prominent disciple of Rngog Lo tsā ba Blo ldan shes rab (c. 1059–1109), a key figure in shaping the scholastic tradition of the Later Diffusion of Buddhism in Tibet. Recognized as one of Rngog Lo's principal successors, Khyung inherited and further developed his teacher's Madhyamaka and *pramāṇa* systems. He played a pivotal role in establishing a distinctively Tibetan dialectical tradition, which would later influence major thinkers such as Phya pa Chos kyi seng ge (1109–1169). Despite his historical significance, Khyung Rin chen grags's name and contributions gradually faded from collective memory, and his life remains largely obscure. No extant works can be definitively attributed to him—not even by title—let alone analyzed in depth.

This talk seeks to reconstruct Khyung's philosophical thought through citations preserved in early scholastic texts, some of which have only recently come to light. Notably, it explores the potential of Tangut materials, which contain substantial quotations of his ideas. The presentation begins by reassessing Khyung's place in Tibetan intellectual history and offering a brief overview of his life. It then outlines the methodological approach to recovering his ideas from Tibetan and Tangut sources. Finally, it considers what these recovered fragments reveal about the formation and evolution of Buddhist scholasticism in Tibet.

Prof. Dr. Dorji Wangchuk (Director) & Dr. Orna Almogi (co-director)
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