



Tibet und Himalaya-Colloquium

Thursday, 09.07.2026, 2:15 pm CEST

Online & University of Bonn, HS XI
Regina-Pacis-Weg 3, 53113 Bonn

Between Belonging and Marginality: Tibetan Muslim Identity in Motion

Ute Wallenböck (University of Bonn)

What does it mean to be Tibetan when that identity must be continually asserted rather than assumed? This talk examines how Tibetan Muslims negotiate Tibetanness and belonging within a diaspora context where Tibetan identity has often been closely associated with Buddhist experience. Drawing on archival research and ethnographic fieldwork, the study traces migration histories shaped by the Republican-era instability and consolidation of the PRC, which dispersed Tibetan Muslim communities across the Himalaya and beyond. The study explores how this minoritised community sustains Tibetan identity through oral histories, foodways, kinship, and everyday practices across generations and borders. By focusing on a community whose Tibetanness is contested from multiple directions, the presentation asks how ethnic and religious identities intersect, and how belonging is recognised, negotiated, and maintained when identity cannot be taken for granted.

Ute Wallenböck holds a Ph.D. in Chinese Studies from the University of Vienna. She later contributed to the EU-funded *Sinophone Borderlands* project at Palacký University Olomouc and the Department of Chinese Studies at Masaryk University in the Czech Republic. Currently, she is a research and teaching associate in Tibetan Studies at the University of Bonn. Her work examines transformations in contemporary Tibet, including diaspora communities' preservation and redefinition of cultural identities through food as well as climate change impacts under Xi Jinping's leadership. As investigator in the Cluster of Excellence at the Bonn Center for Dependency & Slavery Studies, she investigates how Tibetan Muslims negotiate and articulate Tibetanness within complex structures of political and social dependency.

<https://uni-bonn.zoom-x.de/j/62272981527>

Meeting ID: 622 7298 1527 Passcode: 579923

EVERYONE IS WELCOME!

Email Lewis Doney to be placed on the mailing list
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