



Tibet and Himalaya Colloquium

Thursday, 11.06.2026, 2:15 pm CEST

Online & University of Bonn, HS XI

Regina-Pacis-Weg 3, 53113 Bonn

Cosmopolitanizing Gemstone Global Circulation of Amber and Its Localization in Tibet

Kunbzang Tsering (University of Bonn)

Amber has been an important object and commodity flowing into Tibet across borders. It has been widely used and become an important element of material culture there. As a mobile object, amber has long been involved in Tibetans' connections with the outside world. Although previous studies examined the interaction between the global system and local agency in the cross-border mobility of people, goods, animals and ideas, the role of a specific object and its agency in the Tibetans' connections to the global system remains underexplored. Drawing on historical, medical and artisanry texts, as well as ethnographic data on amber, this research examines the way in which amber traveled to Tibet, was internalized in Tibetan material culture through ritual, medicine, trade, jewelry and ornamentation, and came to exercise particular affordances in Tibetan society. By doing this, this research argues that amber facilitated and contributed to shaping Tibetans' connections with wider global systems.

Dr. Kunbzang Tsering is a Humboldt Fellow in the Institute of Oriental and Asian Studies. He is an anthropologist with a PhD in Social and Cultural Anthropology from La Trobe University, Australia, which was recommended for the Nancy Millis Medal. Currently, he works as a Humboldt Postdoctoral Fellow at the University of Bonn. His research focuses on social theories, space and place, cultural ecology, and the intellectual history of Tibet. He has published articles in three languages – English, Chinese and Tibetan. His publications appear in international journals such as *Ethnos: Journal of Anthropology, Environment and History, Culture Agriculture Food Environment, Asian Ethnicity, and Journal of Tibetology*.

<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

(lewis.doney@uni-bonn.de)

