



universität
wien

Institut für Südasien-, Tibet- und
Buddhismuskunde
Spitalgasse 2, Hof 2.1 / 2.7
1090 Wien

Einladung zum Vortrag

Prof. Dr.
Toni Huber
(Humboldt University, Berlin)

Freitag, 29.5.2015, 15h c.t.

Seminarraum 1, Bereich Tibet- und Buddhismuskunde
Institut für Südasien-, Tibet- und Buddhismuskunde,
AAKH, Spitalgasse 2, Hof 2.7
1090 Wien

Recent Transformations of Community Ritual and Religion in the Eastern Himalayas

Case Studies
from Bhutan and
Arunachal Pradesh (India)

During the past few decades, the highlands of the eastern Himalayas have become a highly dynamic arena of transformation in all aspects of life for local populations. The pace of these transformations has measurably accelerated since the 1950s as nation-states and elites in the region have sought (and competed for) full enclosure of the highlands within their respective territories, followed by exploitation of local resources. Practice of rituals at the level of the community, and people's relationship to organized religions have significantly altered over a short span of time, as studies I undertook recently in Bhutan and Arunachal Pradesh demonstrate.

While one case of a nativistic movement (Donyi Polo) is already well-documented in the region, I will introduce research findings on the wide-spread decline of ancestral cults, rapid conversions to Christianity, and upsurges in performance of certain seldom-practiced, premodern rites. By focusing upon individual life-histories and communities ethnographies, it becomes clear that sweeping assessments of transformation in the context of modernization cannot adequately account for what we observe *in situ*.