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Showcasing and Editing Folk Culture

On the Boom of Tibetan 'Culture Festivals' in the PRC

Over the last few years, Tibetan areas all over the PRC have witnessed a boom in large-scale 'culture festivals' (文化节, *rig gnas dus chen*) that are held during the summer, and attended by local amateur performers and/or pan-Tibetan superstars, as well as thousands of onlookers. Building on traditional community rituals, some of these events are decades-old (in Lhasa, Gyantse, Nagchu, or Jyekundo, for example) while some others have emerged, now virtually in every county, with Xi Jinping's new strategies of cultural governance. Those festivals achieve many political goals and, in the wake of the 'China dream' and 'Revitalize Chinese cultural confidence' leitmotifs, colossal budgets have been poured onto culture bureaus. As elsewhere in China, when it comes to showcasing traditional culture, Tibetan culture festivals have been turned into grandiloquent events, filmed with drones, broadcasted live on social media, calling for comments and donations from online spectators. Looking at how the current administration's focus on infrastructure and web technologies affects State cultural production, this presentation will draw from selected field materials from Sichuan and Qinghai and online audiovisual materials from Central Tibet and examine official strategies of rewriting and editing folk culture and local history.



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