

Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin
Institut für Asien- und Afrikawissenschaften

Zentralasien-Seminar

Tibet & Himalaya Colloquium Lecture Series
Lecture No.9 - Monday 05.07.21 – 18:15 CEST via Zoom

Dr. Mona Schrempf, HU Berlin & University of Bern:

**Local Ecologies of Healing in Eastern Bhutan
Jomo Drolma and the Mountain Goddess Ama Jomo**



Ama Jomo or Aum Jomo remains an enigmatic deity as far as her identity goes. As a regionally important mountain goddess located at the Eastern Bhutanese borderland with the Indian state of Arunachal Pradesh she towers over other local deities and is venerated among Tshangla, Dakpa and in particular Brokké speakers across the border. Certain household rituals and a pilgrimage is dedicated to her and local ritual healers, called Jomo, invoke her for specific healing rituals and protection. While to some she is their *skye lha*, to others she is predominantly a Tantric Buddhist form of Jomo Remati, a form of dPal Idan Lha mo. As is often the case, these layered identities of Ama Jomo are no contradiction in terms, but reflect a complex cosmology of bio-socio-cultural ecologies in the area.

However, healers who get possessed by Ama Jomo, and whose practices may oscillate between the shamanic and Buddhist end of the ritual healing spectrum, have been marginalized more recently even within their own local communities which are slowly depopulated due to out-migration and urbanization. This talk reflects on the intricate relationship between cosmologies of healing and the social changes happening within today's modern Bhutan based on an ethnographic case study of Jomo Drolma from Eastern Bhutan (2011-2012).



Mona Schrempf is a social and cultural anthropologist (Dr.phil. in ethnology, Free University Berlin) specializing in ethnographies of diverse contemporary Tibetan medical and other Himalayan healing traditions in Tibetan and Himalayan communities in China, India, Bhutan, and transnationally. Her research interests include the globalization of Asian medicine and global health; Bon and shamanism; performance and ritual; social transformations, inequality and well-being. She is presently teaching at the University of Bern and curates an exhibition on an architectural building in her hometown (mensa50.bauarchiv.org). For a publication list see <https://www.iaaw.hu-berlin.de/en/region/centralasia/central-asian-seminar-1/staff/dr-mona-schrempf>

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