

HUMBOLDT-UNIVERSITÄT ZU BERLIN

Central Asian Seminar
Institute of Asian and African Studies



Tibet & Himalaya Lecture Series

Decolonising Himalayan Studies?
- Putting Theory into Practice -

06.12.21

Joseph Calabrese
University College London

Monday
6.15 CET

Mental Disorders in Bhutan: Traditional and Modern Understandings and Interventions

In this talk, I will reflect on my experiences of combined anthropological fieldwork and volunteer clinical psychological practice in the Kingdom of Bhutan. My research investigates local understandings and presentations of mental illness and various treatment responses in the context of social change. Bhutan has provided an interesting natural experiment in relation to the Foucauldian, constructionist, and decolonial critiques which often assume that mental illness is a local invention of the West. What interested me about Bhutan was that it has not been indoctrinated into 'Western psychiatric ideology'. The mental health system was founded only in 1997 and it is still not the dominant approach to the treatment of mental illness (religious ritual is). And Bhutan was never colonized. It has remained relatively isolated from the West. So, would I see radically different patterns of mental illness? Or the same patterns to which I have become accustomed? Or no mental illness? I will discuss my findings and the existing resources for mental health in Bhutanese culture.

Register for Zoom Link
<https://hu-berlin.zoom.us/meeting/register/u5crcu6hrzkjHNIPeTxwYcvC61Ux0sf-DIhn>

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