

Thrue: Initiation and Healing of Ritual Specialists in Western Bhutan

Abstract

During my field research from January to June 2015 and February to March 2016 I met a special type of ritualist specialists in western Bhutan, the female practitioners being called *neljom* (Tib. *rnal 'byor ma*)¹ the male *pawo* (Tib. *dpa' bo*). Apart from taking care of the local population's problems there is also a range of rituals that is directed to the specialists' own well-being and healthiness. One of these rituals is named *thru*² and is performed to heal a *neljom* or *pawo*'s illness in the case that it derived from pollution.

The article is based on a poster that was presented at the 4th International Seminar of Young Tibetologists in Leipzig in September 2015.

¹ The language spoken in the area is Dzongkha, a dialect that developed from Classical Tibetan. As Dzongkha does not have a definite orthography I will give the terms in a phonetic spelling. Whenever a term clearly derives from Classical Tibetan, I will add the transliteration according to Wylie in brackets upon the first mentioning of the term.

² The term « *thru* » is most probably written « *khru* » in Wylie, but this could not be confirmed by the interview partners.