

SFB-VISCOM (42) and FSP Gemeinschaftskonzepte, Identitäten und politische Integration (Universität Wien)

present

BERTHE JANSEN (Universität Leiden)

RULING A MICROSOCIETY:

Buddhist monasticism and its effects on society in traditional Tibet

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ABSTRACT

Monasteries in pre-1950s Tibet were often large and well-organized corporate institutions. The members of those corporations, the monks, had to commit to certain sets of rules or vows, which are stipulated in the monastic codes that originated in India: the Vinaya. In addition to those rules, monks had to keep to local monastic rules, often authored by important religious masters. The texts that contain these rules, called *bca' yig*, often address all inhabitants of the monastery. Regularly, however, they also convey policies intended to be implemented by the monastery itself – often the policies also directly and indirectly had an effect on the laypeople in the surroundings. This presentation will discuss the relationship between the monastery as a micro-society and the society at large.

BIOGRAPHY

Berthe Jansen is a researcher at Leiden University. Her current research focuses on the interaction between monastic and secular law in the Ganden Phodrang period, which is a four-year project funded by the NWO's VENI grant. In general, she is interested in the influence of the pre-modern Tibetan Buddhist monastery on society at large. The main sources she examines are Tibetan monastic guidelines (*bca' yig*), on which she has published various articles. In 2015, she obtained her PhD in Buddhist Studies at Leiden University with a dissertation entitled 'The Monastery Rules: Buddhist Monastic Organization in Pre-modern Tibet.' In addition to her academic research endeavours, she has been working as an interpreter and translator of (Buddhist) Tibetan since 2004.

