

Changing Gendered Religious Practice in Yolmo: Before and After the 2015 Earthquake

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Abstract:

Yolmo people, women and men, have been a devout community of practitioners of Buddhism as long as remembered. Their ways of practicing it have been different according to gender, however. To put in a nutshell, while men of Yolmo have been generally expected to read the sacred Tibetan scriptures and practice as religious superiors (“lama”), women were not allowed, even less expected, to do so and given no choice but remain lay believers. This presentation follows the ongoing transformation of their religious practice, especially that of women’s, amidst reconstruction process after the disastrous 2015 earthquake that hit the area severely and brought their traditional village Buddhist practice to a near halt. At a closer look, the transformation turns out the continuation of change that started long before; the presentation will make efforts to situate the change in the larger socio-economic-political developments in Nepal, including the first and second democratization, the massive trend for emigration, politics of “inclusion” and federal restructuring.