

A Bibliography of Tibetan Religious Ritual

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This is a work-in-progress listing of scholarly books and articles dealing with Tibetan religious rituals. It includes Bon po rituals and rituals performed by Tibetan ethnic groups, such as the Thakali. Not included are folk customs, discussions of pilgrimage (unless they deal with its ritual aspects), or art historical works describing ritual implements (unless they also discuss their use in ritual). All of the sources listed here are scholarly, and translations of ritual texts and meditative practices that are not also works of critical scholarship are not included. When the relevance of a work to ritual is not evident from the title, we have added a parenthetical line after the entry to explain its inclusion in this list.

The bibliography is limited to Western European languages and privileges writings in English. It does not, therefore, include the numerous texts composed in Chinese, Japanese, Tibetan, etc. It is limited to print literature and thus omits sound recordings, videos, etc. Many of the hyperlinks require access passwords, e.g., JSTOR.

If you have suggestions for possible additions or deletions, please email Alyson Prude at mprude13@hotmail.com.

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Adams, Vincanne. 1997. "[Dreams of a Final Sherpa](#)." *American Anthropologist*, vol. 99, no. 1, pp. 85-98.
(Deals with death rituals and visualizations.)

Andresen, Jensine. 1997. *Kalacakra: Textual and ritual perspectives*. Ph. D. dissertation, Harvard University, Cambridge.

Aris, Michael. 1976. "[The Admonition of the Thunderbolt Cannon-Ball' and its Place in the Bhutanese New Year Festival](#)." *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies*, University of London, vol. 39, no. 3, pp. 601-35.

Arnott, Geoffrey. 1989. "[Nechung: A Modern Parallel to the Delphic Oracle?](#)" *Greece and Rome*, 2nd Series, vol. 36, no. 2, pp. 152-57.
(Describes Nechung possession/ritual.)

Asboe, Walter. 1938. "[Social Festivals in Ladakh Kashmir](#)." *Folklore*, vol. 49, no. 4, pp. 376-89.

Asboe, Walter. 1936. "[The Scape-Goat in Western Tibet](#)." *Man*, vol. 36, pp. 74-75.

Asboe, Walter. 1933. "[Social Functions in Lahul, Kangra District, Panjab.](#)" *The Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute of Great Britain and Ireland*, vol. 63. (Jan. - Jun., 1933), pp. 189-205.

(Describes New Year's festival.)

Atwood, Christopher. 1996. "[Buddhism and Popular Ritual in Mongolian Religion: A Reexamination of the Fire Cult.](#)" *History of Religions*, vol. 36, no. 2, pp. 112-39.

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(Ch. 8 "Marriage and Family Life" has brief info on marriage rituals. Ch.11 "The Pattern of Religious Life: Monasteries and Religious Service" has a little on ritual as well.)

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Bentor, Yael. 1997. *Consecration of Images and Stupas in Indo-Tibetan Tantric Buddhism*. Leiden: Brill.

Bentor, Yael. 1997. "The Horseback Consecration Ritual." In *Religions of Tibet in Practice*, ed. Donald Lopez. Princeton: Princeton University Press, pp. 234-254.

Bentor, Yael. 1997. "Interiorized Fire Offerings of Breathing, Inner Heat and the Subtle Body." In *Tibetan Studies: Proceedings of the 7th Seminar of the International Association for Tibetan Studies, Graz 1995, vol. 1*, eds. Helmut Krasser, Michael Torsten Much, Ernst Steinkellner and Helmut Tauscher. Wien: Verlag der Österreichische Akademie der Wissenschaften, pp. 51-58.

Bentor, Yael. 1996. "[Literature on Consecration \(Rab gnas\).](#)" In *Tibetan Literature: Studies in Genre*, eds. José Ignacio Cabezón and Roger Jackson. Ithaca: Snow Lion Publications, pp.290-311.

Bentor, Yael. 1995. "[On the Indian Origins of the Tibetan Practice of Depositing Relics and Dhāranīs in Stūpas and Images.](#)" *Journal of the American Oriental Society*, vol. 115, no. 2, pp. 248-61.

Bentor, Yael. 1992. "Sūtra-style Consecration in Tibet and its Importance for Understanding the Historical Development of the Indo-Tibetan Consecration Ritual for Stūpas and Images." In *Tibetan Studies: Proceedings of the 5th Seminar of the International Association for Tibetan Studies, Narita 1989, vol. 1*, eds. Shōren Ihara and Zuihō Yamaguchi. Tokyo: Naritasan Shinshoji, pp. 1-12.

Berglie, Judith. 1992. "Tibetan Spirit-Mediumship: Change and Continuity: Some Observations from a Revisit to Nepal." In *Tibetan Studies: Proceedings of the 5th Seminar of the International Association for Tibetan Studies, vol. 2*, eds. Shōren Ihara and Zuihō Yamaguchi. Tokyo: Naritasan Shinshoji, pp. 361-68.
(Discusses medium rituals.)

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Berglie, Judith. 1982. "Spirit-Possession in Theory and Practice: Séances with Tibetan Spirit Mediums in Nepal." In *Religious Ecstasy*, ed. Nils Holm. Stockholm: Almqvist and Wiksell, pp. 151-166.

Berglie, Judith. 1976. "[Preliminary Remarks on Some Tibetan 'Spirit-Mediums' in Nepal.](#)" *Kailash*, vol. 4, no. 1, pp. 85-108.

Berglie, Per-Arne. 1978. "On the Question of Tibetan Shamanism." In *Tibetan Studies: Presented at the Seminar of Young Tibetologists, Zurich, June 26 – July 1, 1977*, eds. Martin Brauen and Per Kvaerne. Zürich: Völkerkundemuseum der Universität Zürich, pp. 39-52.

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(On an ancient Bon ritual: 'The broad-antlered stag'.)

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Chao, Emily. 1999. "[The Maoist Shaman and the Madman: Ritual Bricolage, Failed Ritual, and Failed Ritual Theory.](#)" *Cultural Anthropology*, vol. 14, no. 4, pp. 505-34. (About Naxi ethnic group; more to do with politics than religion.)

Childs, Geoff. 1997. "Householder Lamas and the Persistence of Tradition: Animal Sacrifice in Himalayan Buddhist Communities." In *Tibetan Studies: Proceedings of the 7th Seminar of the International Association for Tibetan Studies, Graz 1995, vol. 1*, eds. Helmut Krasser, Michael Torsten Much, Ernst Steinkellner and Helmut Tauscher. Wien: Verlag der Österreichischen Akademie der Wissenschaften, pp. 141-55.

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(Includes discussion of how the text “became less an active teaching system than an icon, worshipped only through its elaborate empowerment ritual” and its role in reinventing the Nyingma sect via large public rituals.)

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(Not about ritual, per se, but refers to rituals she did throughout her life to try and cure her leprosy and the ritual cause of her illness.)

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(See especially 108f, the section on exorcism.)

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(Abstract states, "We interpret the traditional musical, ritual and historical texts, the oral interpretations by recognized keepers of tradition as well as ethnographic observations of repeated performances of the selected ritual in each of the four major orders of Tibetan Buddhism, to elucidate their differences in structure and function.")
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