Lama or monk? Religious semantic categories of Buddhism in Bhutan

Lecture by Dr. Françoise Pommaret
CNRS Paris and Institute of Language and Culture Studies of the Royal University of Bhutan

Date: Tuesday, February 18, 2014
Time: 18.15 – 20.00
Venue: Unitobler
Lerchenweg 36
CH 3012 Bern
Room F —121

For Westerners the religious categories of Buddhism in Bhutan are often puzzling because of the own monotheist traditions, which serve them as a frame of reference. The fuzzy Occidental perception of Buddhism in Bhutan is exacerbated by the fact that the term lama is used freely in the West to label any religious person within the Buddhist cultural context. This illustrated lecture presents an overview of the different religious categories, which form a complex support to Buddhism in Bhutan. The socio-economic background of each category and their interrelations will also be examined.

The lecture is hosted by the Society Switzerland-Bhutan and the Bern Linguistics Institute.