

La section de tibétain (département EISAT) de l'Inalco a le plaisir de recevoir le Dr. Timothy Thurston (Univ. Leeds) le **mercredi 10 juin 2026, de 18h30 à 19h30**, pour une conférence intitulée :

Disappearing storyworlds, precarious environments, and the work of cultural sustainability: Perspectives on Tibetan oral traditions in contemporary China



Inspired bard Tenpa Gyaltsan (བུ་མཁན་པོ་རྒྱལ་མགོན་པོ།) tells the epic in Yushu Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture in 2023. © T. Thurston

“If Tibetans no longer live on the grasslands, then will there be any more inspired bards”? Variations of this questions have been posed to me more than once by inspired bards of the Epic of King Gesar (མཁན་པོ་རྒྱལ་མགོན་པོ།). It revealed a deep insecurity: behind confident, on record statements about the Chinese government’s support for the epic, there was concern about this phenomenon of dream-inspired epic storytelling and its future in the face of significant ruptures to Tibetan life in modern China. Reflecting on over a decade conducting ethnographic fieldwork in Tibetan communities of China, this talk asks: what happens when Tibetan language and narratives fall silent? What happens when Tibetans move away from the land? What happens to Tibet when Tibetan ways of being and knowing are marginalized?

Dr Timothy Thurston is Associate Professor in the Study of Contemporary China in the School of Languages, Cultures and Societies at the University of Leeds. His research focuses mostly oral cultures of Tibetan communities in Amdo and Kham. He has published two books based on earlier research focused on Tibetan comedy in Amdo: *Satirical Tibet* and a bilingual edition of translated comedy scripts entitled *Careful Village and Other ‘Khashag’ from Tibet: the Amdo Comedies of Menla Jyab*. He is leading the Tibetan Sustainable Heritage Initiative (TaSHI) funded by a UKRI Future Leaders Fellowship, and aimed at supporting sustainable futures for Tibetan culture in China and globally.

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 Visio/online : https://rendez-vous.renater.fr/Conference_Tim_Thurston_Inalco_10_Juin_2026_124dd1-685b53-f3093c