



The Social Life of Tibetan Biography: Textuality, Community, and Authority in the Lineage of Tokden Shakya Shri (Studies in Modern Tibetan Culture)

Amy Holmes-Tagchungdarpa

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The Social Life of Tibetan Biography explores the creation of Tibetan religious authority in Tibetan cultural areas throughout East, Inner, and South Asia through engaging with the relationship between textual biography and social community in the case of the Eastern Tibetan yogi Tokden Shakya Shri (1853–1919). It explores the different mechanisms used by Shakya Shri's community in the creation of his biographical portrait to develop his lineage, including the use of biographical tropes, details of interpersonal connections, educational and patronage networks, and representations of sacred site creation and maintenance. In doing so, this study decenters Tibetan and Himalayan religious history through recognizing that peripheries could act as alternative centers of authority for diverse Tibetan Buddhist communities.

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