Buddhist Studies Symposium

University of Toronto
August 17-21, 2017

The Robert H. N. Ho Family Foundation
Buddhist Studies Symposium

A symposium to celebrate Fellows of
The Robert H. N. Ho Family Foundation Program in
Buddhist Studies

University of Toronto
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Special thanks to
The Robert H. N. Ho Family Foundation Centre for Buddhist Studies
at the University of Toronto for hosting the symposium
**Symposium Proceedings**

A symposium to celebrate Fellows of The Robert H. N. Ho Family Foundation Program in Buddhist Studies. This event is sponsored by The Robert H. N. Ho Family Foundation and organized by the American Council of Learned Societies in cooperation with The Robert H. N. Ho Family Foundation Centre for Buddhist Studies at the University of Toronto and the XVIIIth Congress of the International Association of Buddhist Studies.

**Welcome Supper – Thursday Evening**
*Faculty Club, University of Toronto*

Supper for Symposium participants and welcome remarks by Ted Lipman, chief executive officer of The Robert H. N. Ho Family Foundation, and Pauline Yu, president of ACLS

**Fellows’ Workshop – Friday and Saturday**
*Department for the Study of Religion, University of Toronto*

Presentations of work-in-progress by Fellows. Fellows, members of the Advisory Committee, and invited discussants will explore the potential synergies in Fellows’ projects and their implications for the developing field of Buddhist studies worldwide.

**Roundtable and Reception – Monday**
*Royal Ontario Museum*

A public roundtable discussion on “Bridging Divides in Buddhist Studies,” followed by a reception jointly sponsored by ACLS and the University of Toronto to celebrate the Fellows and to announce the opening of the The Robert H. N. Ho Family Foundation Centre for Buddhist Studies at the University of Toronto
Friday

University of Toronto
Department for the Study of Religion
Jackman Humanities Building, Room 318

Session I
Chair: Andrzej W. Tymowski, ACLS
Comments: James A. Benn, McMaster University
Fellows: Charles Carstens, Harvard University
Sangseraima Ujeed, University of Oxford

Session II
Chair: Andrzej W. Tymowski, ACLS
Comments: Janet Gyatso, Harvard University
Fellows: Alex Hsu, North Dakota State University
Jeffrey Kotyk, Leiden University

Session III
Chair: Andrzej W. Tymowski, ACLS
Comments: Vincent Tournier, SOAS University of London
Fellows: Kwi Jeong Lee, Princeton University
Sophia Warshall, University of California, Berkeley

Luncheon

Session IV
Chair: Stephen F. Teiser, Princeton University
Comments: Juhyung Rhi, Seoul National University
Christoph Emmrich, University of Toronto
Fellows: Dagmar Schwerk, University of Hamburg
Davey Tomlinson, University of Chicago
Friday

3:30 - 4:45 pm

Session V
Chair: Donald S. Lopez, University of Michigan
Comments: Ute Hüsken, Heidelberg University
Fellows: Kyle Bond, Princeton University
William McGrath, University of Virginia

Saturday

University of Toronto
Department for the Study of Religion
Jackman Humanities Building, Room 318

Session VI
Chair: Steven C. Wheatley, ACLS
Comments: Birgit Kellner, Austrian Academy of Sciences
Fellows: Deba Barua (Postdoctoral Fellow), Rice University
Marion Dapsance (Postdoctoral Fellow), in residence at Columbia University
Juan Wu (Postdoctoral Fellow), Tsinghua University, Beijing

Luncheon

Reflections on the Workshop
Moderator: Donald S. Lopez, University of Michigan
University of Toronto
Atrium, Bahen Centre

Sunday

10:00 am - 6:00 pm

IABS Registration

Monday

Royal Ontario Museum
Eaton Theater

6:00 - 7:30pm

Roundtable Discussion: “Bridging Divides in Buddhist Studies”

Moderator: Pauline Yu, American Council of Learned Societies

Speakers: James Benn, McMaster University
“The Divide Between Textual and Historical Studies”

Amanda Goodman, University of Toronto
“Translation from Sanskrit to Chinese”

Juhyung Rhi, Seoul National University
“Bridging Buddhist Studies and Art History”

Royal Ontario Museum
Chen Court

7:30 - 9:30pm

Reception sponsored by ACLS and The Robert H. N. Ho Family Foundation Centre for Buddhist Studies at the University of Toronto.

Gallery viewings available for Asia Suite of Galleries Level 1 and 3.
Speakers

James A. Benn is a scholar of medieval Chinese religions, with a focus on Buddhism. He has published on topics such as self-immolation in Chinese Buddhism, apocryphal Buddhist scriptures, and the relationships between Buddhism and tea in premodern China. He is currently a professor of Buddhism and East Asian religions at McMaster University.

Amanda Goodman is cross-appointed in the Department for the Study of Religion and the Department of East Asian Studies at the University of Toronto. Her research focuses on the formative Tang-Song transition period of Chinese Buddhism, and specifically the Chinese esoteric or tantric Buddhist traditions of the eighth through tenth centuries.

Juhyung Rhi is a professor of art history at Seoul National University. From 2012-2013, he was the Edwin C. and Elizabeth A. Whitehead Fellow at the Institute for Advanced Study in Princeton, NJ. As a specialist in Indian Buddhist art, he has written extensively on early Indian traditions, in particular Gandhāran.

Pauline Yu became president of the American Council of Learned Societies in July 2003. She received her BA in history and literature from Harvard University and her MA and PhD in comparative literature from Stanford University. She is the author and editor of five books and dozens of articles on classical Chinese poetry, literary theory, comparative poetics, and issues in the humanities.
The Robert H. N. Ho Family Foundation Fellows
Buddhism in Two Bengals from 1757 to 1988: Theravada Buddhism as a Minority Religion and its Transnational Connections

DEBA BARUA

Asian Studies
Rice University

ABSTRACT
Undivided Bengal was the last stronghold of Indian Buddhism. Southeastern Bengal is the only region where Buddhists, albeit as a minority, have maintained a living tradition. To date, Buddhism in Bengals remains less explored and unaccounted for in modern scholarship on Buddhism due to the generalization of Indian Buddhism’s demise in medieval India. This research addresses this omission by studying Buddhism in Bengals (1757-1988) from a perspective of minority religion. In addition, it contextualizes contemporary Buddhism in Bengal in the nexus of transnational connections with fellow majority Buddhists in Sri Lanka and Myanmar. To study Theravada Buddhism as a minority religion is rare, and to do so within transnational Buddhist networks is what uniquely characterizes this research.
ABSTRACT
Using literary, documentary, and art historical evidence from the eleventh- to fourteenth-century Japan, I will argue that Buddhist ascetic practice was believed to generate revelatory dreams and visions. Irrespective of whether such visionary events actually happened, a plethora of accounts across a diverse range of genres and media make the claim that dreams and visions led to the creation of new texts, icons, practices, ecclesiastic lineages, and cultic sites. My dissertation will investigate accounts of such visionary events and the practices aimed at producing them in order to reevaluate the roles of ascetics and ascetic practices within medieval Japanese society understood as a single social system.
Mapping Power: Ordering the Cosmos through the Coronation Ceremonies of Konbaung Burma

CHARLES CARSTENS

Religion (Buddhism)
Harvard University

ABSTRACT
This dissertation examines the historical process through which coronation rituals were repaired, theorized, and memorialized in Burma of the Konbaung period. These practices were central to a project of reproducing Buddhist principles of order, defined as schemes of power, purity, and auspiciousness that organize persons, objects, and places. These ordering principles pervasively structured Buddhist texts, practices, and institutions. They did not exist as an explicit worldview, but an intuitive feeling of where things “should be.” Coronation ceremonies stood as core practices, which calibrated other practices of Buddhist ordering principles. Studying coronation texts, and their associated Buddhist ordering principles, offers new opportunities to remap the field of Buddhist studies and politics.
Alexandra David-Néel, the French explorer and writer famous for reaching Lhasa in 1924, was probably the first to use the phrase “Buddhist Modernism” (1911). She was one of the most prolific inventors and active promoters of modern Buddhism, with more than 30 books published between 1898 and 2003. However, in spite of the abundant literature she inspired, no scholarly work has been done to elucidate her specific contribution to the understanding, imagination, and popularity of Buddhism in the West. The aim of this research is to remedy this lack through: the study of the myth she contributed to create around her own person, an analysis of her writings on Buddhism in the cultural context of her time, and an investigation of her role in the promotion of Buddhism as a world religion.
ABSTRACT
What are Buddhist anthologies, and what kind of work do they perform on Buddhist texts and their traditions? In my dissertation, I investigate the composition and copying of a seventh-century Chinese Buddhist anthology called *A Grove of Pearls from the Garden of Dharma (Fayuan zhulin)* as a case study. I hypothesize that *A Grove of Pearls* can profitably be imagined as a textual trace of what I call “practices of scriptural economy,” a mode of interpreting the written Dharma wherein Chinese Buddhist scholars reduced and re-organized multitudes of Buddhist scriptures to a supposedly more efficacious format. In tracing how Chinese Buddhists cut, collected, and copied scripture, I make clearer how they engaged with scriptural material and the difficulty of its abundance.
ABSTRACT

The present study establishes a chronology for the first substantial introduction of occidental astrology into China on the part of Buddhists in the eighth century, in particular Subhakarasimha and Amoghavajra, and argues that the subsequent widespread interest in astrology in China was enabled and encouraged by Tantric Buddhism. The resulting practical astrological texts designed for effective star worship and astral magic on the part of Buddhists are examined. The influence of these developments in Chinese society are identified and considered. The result of this study sheds light on hitherto unstudied currents of Eurasian cultural exchange which had far reaching influences in East Asian cultures.
Remaking the Image: Discourses of Buddhist Icon Worship in Medieval China, ca. 300-850 CE

KWI JEONG LEE

Religious Studies
Princeton University

ABSTRACT
This dissertation explores ways in which Chinese intellectuals criticized and defended the Buddhist practice of icon worship from the fourth- through the mid-ninth centuries. Analyzing logical and rhetorical tactics adopted by proponents and opponents of the Buddhist image cult, this study examines how the controversies over image worship reflected pre-Buddhist Chinese theories of the image and ritual, and permeated though the broader discussion of Buddhist icon worship. By doing so, the dissertation demonstrates that the acceptance of Buddhist icon worship into Chinese ritual culture was a result of constant contestation and negotiation among learned circles whose voices actively partook in the process of determining a proper form of religion for the state.
The Buddhist Narration of Medicine: The Drangti Corpus in Tibetan Medical and Religious History

WILLIAM MCGRATH

Religious Studies
University of Virginia

ABSTRACT
At once Tibetan and cosmopolitan, theoretical and practical, Buddhist and secular—the early historical narratives of Tibetan medicine were shrouded in such controversy that, as Zurkhar Lodrō Gyelpo quipped, “in this snowy land of Tibet, as soon as three or more [physicians] get together . . . they discuss them.” In my dissertation I extend recent scholarship on the cross-cultural origins of Tibetan medicine to show for the first time that a single family of medieval physicians—the Drangti clan—created the narrative through which all later tradition understood the history of Tibetan medicine. By analyzing hundreds of newly available manuscripts, I offer critical perspectives on received historiography in order to better understand Tibetan medical thought in its formative period.

DAGMAR SCHWERK

Tibetan Studies
University of Hamburg

ABSTRACT

As the Mahāmudrā doctrine is the paramount teaching in all bKa’-brgyud schools, it represents a crucial point from which to determine the doctrinal positions and ideas of the Sixty-Ninth rJe mKhan-po dGe’-dun-rin-chen (1926-1997) and his school. A critical edition and annotated translation of a verse commentary by the Sixty-Ninth rJe mKhan-po dGe’-dun-rin-chen on a root text about the controversy on the Mahāmudrā doctrine, composed by the Ninth rJe mKhan-po Shakya-rin-chen (1710-1759), form the basis of the textual analysis of the Sixty-Ninth rJe mKhan-po dGe’-dun-rin-chen’s Mahāmudrā interpretation. Additionally, rJe dGe’-dun-rin-chen’s life and thought are examined on the basis of minor works of mainly systematizing and doxographical character included in his gSung ‘bum and a hagiography which was written by his direct disciple and acquired during a field research in Bhutan.
A Buddhist Critique of Intentionality: Enlightenment and the Nature of Consciousness in Late Indian Buddhist Philosophy

DAVEY TOMLINSON

Philosophy of Religions
University of Chicago

ABSTRACT

This dissertation explores the relationship between the buddhological commitments of philosophers—commitments, that is, to what buddhahood is and how the path to it is to be traversed—and their systematic philosophical thought. In particular, I consider the unorthodox position in philosophy of mind of Ratnakarasanti (eleventh century), who defended the ultimate existence of contentless consciousness on the basis, I argue, of buddhological commitments developed in his enigmatic interpretation of tantra. This position is then juxtaposed with that of Ratnakara’s younger contemporary and critic, Jñanasrimitra, who defended the orthodox view that consciousness is by definition contentful in relation to a very different, non-tantric buddhalogy.
Mapping the Lineages of Tibetan Buddhism: A Study of the “Thob yig gsal ba’i me long” (“The Clear Mirror of the Records of Teachings Received”) of the Monk Scholar Za-ya Pandita Blo-bzang ‘phrin-las, 1642-1715

SANGSERAIMA UJEED

Oriental Studies: Tibetan Buddhism
University of Oxford

ABSTRACT
The “Thob yig gsal ba’i me long” is a seventeenth-century thob yig (records of teachings received) compiled by one of the most distinguished Mongolian Buddhist scholars of his times who is still celebrated as such today: Za-ya Pandita Blo-bzang ‘phrin-las (1642-1715). The work, written in Tibetan, represents one of the largest and most comprehensive surviving examples of its genre. This dissertation critically analyses carefully chosen sections of the text to demonstrate the value of this work as an encyclopaedic authority of the Dge-lugs-pa dominated Tibetan Buddhist world of Central Asia in regard to religious history, religious interface and exchanges between traditions, major teachings, practices, transmission lineages, influential figures and important deities.
Translating the Buddha: Indonesian Reliquaries and the Vimala Uṣṇīṣa Dhāraṇī

SOPHIA WARSHALL

South and Southeast Asian Studies
University of California, Berkeley

ABSTRACT
This project documents and analyzes the corpus of Indonesian stupika—miniature, clay, text-containing reliquaries of sixth-to-tenth-century Sumatra, Java, Bawean and Bali. Specifically, this dissertation leverages the existence in Indonesia of texts less commonly found in stupika through the case study of the vimala uṣṇīṣa dhāraṇī. Reading these objects as artifacts of the process of cultural translation or localization, I mine this data to gain insight into the transregional and the local elements of religious life. This research contributes significantly to our understanding of the history of Buddhist doctrine and practice, together with the local diversification of religious ideology, of insular Southeast Asia during the final centuries of the first millennium.
Royals across Religious Boundaries: A Comparative Study of Stories of Shared Royal Personages in Indian Buddhism and Jainism

JUAN WU

ABSTRACT
This project compares Buddhist and Jaina narrative traditions of four groups of royals, namely, King Bimbisara of Magadha and his family, King Pradyota of Avanti and his family, King Udayana of Vatsa and his family, and King Candragupta with his Mauryan family. Its purpose is not to offer an alternative political history of early India, but to explore the fluidity of identities of these royals across Buddhism and Jainism, and the diverse ways in which Buddhist and Jaina storytellers used these royals to convey their own views on issues such as the relations between religion and the state, the tension between ideals and realities of kingship, etc. In doing so, the project also sheds new light on both common narrative heritage of Buddhism and Jainism, and unique properties of each tradition.
Workshop Advisers
JAMES A. BENN
Department of Religious Studies
McMaster University

RECENT RESEARCH INTERESTS
James Benn’s research is aimed at understanding the practices and world views of medieval men and women, both religious and lay, through the close reading of primary sources in literary Chinese—the lingua franca of East Asian religions. He has concentrated on three major areas of research: bodily practice in Chinese religions; the ways in which people create and transmit new religious practices and doctrines; and the religious dimensions of commodity culture.

RECENT PUBLICATIONS


RECENT RESEARCH INTERESTS
Christoph Emmrich engages with fields as diverse as Nepalese and Burmese Buddhism, Sanskrit, Pali, Newar, Burmese and Mon literature, and Tamil Jainism. He works with girl children, young women and ritual specialists among the Newars in the Kathmandu Valley (Nepal) and in Yangon, Mandalay, and Mawlamyine (Burma) studying their involvement in Buddhist practices related to marriage, education, monastic ordination and the consecration of images.

RECENT PUBLICATIONS

RECENT RESEARCH INTERESTS
Janet Gyatso is a specialist in Buddhist studies with a concentration on Tibetan cultural and intellectual history. Her recent work has focused upon alternative early modernities and the conjunctions and disjunctures between religious and scientific epistemologies in Tibetan medicine in the sixteenth–eighteenth centuries. Her new research includes the reception of Daṇḍin’s Kāvyādarśa in Tibet, and the phenomenology of animal communication.

RECENT PUBLICATIONS


RECENT RESEARCH INTERESTS
Ute Hüsken’s current project, “Changing patterns of women’s ritual agency,” aims to analytically bring together several cases of radical changes regarding the religious and ritual agency of women in Indian religious traditions. She was educated in Indian and Tibetan studies at the Seminar für Indologie und Buddhismuskunde at Goettingen University (Germany). Her PhD thesis is an investigation of the rules for Buddhist nuns in the Theravada tradition, including a comparison with the rules for monks of the same tradition, and an analysis of Buddhaghosa’s commentary „Die Vorschriften für die buddhistische Nonnengemeinde im Vinaya-Pitaka der Theravādin“.

RECENT PUBLICATIONS


RECENT RESEARCH INTERESTS
Birgit Kellner’s area of specialization is philosophical analysis within Indian and Tibetan Buddhism. More specifically, she focuses on epistemology and logic, the so-called pramāṇa school founded by Dignaga and Dharmakirti, in its Indian context and its manifold forms in Tibet. She investigates Buddhist philosophy in its philological dimensions and historical context, and with a view to its general philosophical significance.

RECENT PUBLICATIONS


RECENT RESEARCH INTERESTS
Donald S. Lopez has written widely on Indian Mahayana Buddhism and on Tibetan Buddhism. His current projects include a commentary (with Jacqueline Stone) on the Lotus Sūtra, a biography of the Tibetan savant Gendun Chopel (1903-1951), and a translation of a compendium of Buddhist philosophy by Jangkya Rolpe Dorje (1717-1786).

RECENT PUBLICATIONS


RECENT RESEARCH INTERESTS
Juhyung Rhi mainly works on Buddhist art of India, Central Asia, and Korea. The majority of his publications concern the ancient Indian tradition up to the fifth century CE, especially focusing on ancient Gandhara, and the Korean tradition. Simultaneously, he has explored theoretical issues in stylistic reasoning, iconography, and conflict between aesthetic and devotional attitudes and attempted to apply them to Korean Buddhist art in a critical spirit. He has also produced works on East Asian pilgrims who traveled to India.

RECENT PUBLICATIONS


RECENT RESEARCH INTERESTS
Stephen F. Teiser is interested in the interactions between Buddhism and Chinese culture during the medieval period. He focuses on the more pervasive and common aspects of Buddhist culture, including concepts of the afterlife, the institutionalization of monasticism, and the rituals of lay Buddhist practice. He draws on canonical printed texts as well as local manuscript productions and artistic evidence.

RECENT PUBLICATIONS
- *Yili yu fojiao yanjiu 儀禮與佛教研究 (Ritual and the Study of Buddhism)* based on the 2014 Guanghua Lectures, Fudan University (復旦大學光華人文傑出學者講座), forthcoming.


RECENT RESEARCH INTERESTS
Vincent Tournier’s current project focuses on Buddhist inscriptions of the Deccan, investigating in particular issues of patronage and religious aspirations throughout the Middle Period of Indian Buddhism. He is the general editor (with Arlo Griffiths) of the ongoing digital corpus *Early Inscriptions of Andhradeśa*, set to document anew, edit, and translate all pre-seventh-century inscriptions from the present states of Andhra Pradesh and Telangana.

RECENT PUBLICATIONS


Established in 2005 by Mr. Robert H. N. Ho, The Robert H. N. Ho Family Foundation is a private philanthropic organization based in Hong Kong.

Through its support of innovative programs, the Foundation raises awareness and fosters appreciation of Chinese cultural heritage, nurtures the presentation of the history of Chinese arts, and supports the application of Buddhist insights to the challenges facing society today.

ACLS, a private, nonprofit federation of 75 national scholarly organizations, is the preeminent representative of American scholarship in the humanities and related social sciences.

Working with the Foundation, ACLS offers an articulated set of fellowship and grant competitions that expands the understanding and interpretation of Buddhist thought in scholarship and society, strengthens international networks of Buddhist studies, and increases the visibility of innovative currents in those studies.
Standing Buddha (1400-1600), Ayutthaya, Thailand