THE ROBERT H. N. HO FAMILY FOUNDATION

UNIVERSITY OF BRITISH COLUMBIA

JULY 7-9, 2015
Buddhist Studies Today

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

University of British Columbia
July 7–9, 2015

Symposium Proceedings

A three-day symposium to celebrate the first Dissertation Fellows of The Robert H. N. Ho Family Foundation Program in Buddhist Studies. The event is sponsored by The Robert H. N. Ho Family Foundation, organized by the American Council of Learned Societies, and hosted by the University of British Columbia.

Convocation – Tuesday Evening

Introductory remarks by representatives of the University of British Columbia, The Robert H. N. Ho Family Foundation, and the American Council of Learned Societies, followed by a keynote address by Professor Donald Lopez

Fellows’ Workshop – Wednesday and Thursday

Presentations of work in progress by Dissertation 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

Assessing the State of the Field of Buddhist Studies – Thursday

Roundtable of program advisers to highlight themes that emerged from placing the research interests of the fellows in conversation with each other

Special thanks to the University of British Columbia for hosting the Symposium
Speakers

**Arvind Gupta** is the thirteenth President and Vice-Chancellor of the University of British Columbia (UBC), a position he has held since July 1, 2014. He was previously CEO and scientific director of Mitacs, a Canadian not-for-profit dedicated to fostering the next generation of innovators. A professor of computer science at UBC since 2009, he is a well-regarded expert in research and innovation policy with a proven record of accomplishment in building meaningful research collaborations.

**Ted Lipman** was appointed the chief executive officer of The Robert H. N. Ho Family Foundation in 2011. He received his BA in Asian Studies from the University of British Columbia, then undertook studies in Chinese history at Peking University. He had a 35-year career as a diplomat representing Canada, principally in Greater China, with assignments in Hong Kong, Beijing, Shanghai and Taipei. For four years, he served as the Canadian Ambassador to South and North Korea.

**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 or editor of five books and dozens of articles on classical Chinese poetry, literary theory, comparative poetics, and issues in the humanities. She serves on the board of The Robert H. N. Ho Family Foundation, the American Academy of Arts and Sciences, the Teagle Foundation, the Chiang Ching-Kuo Foundation for International Scholarly Exchange, and the American Academy in Berlin.

**Tuesday**

**5:30—6:00pm**
**RECEPTION ON THE TERRACE**
Sage Bistro—East Side

**6:00—7:00pm**
**CONVOCATION**
Introductory Remarks

*Arvind Gupta*
President, University of British Columbia

*Ted Lipman*
Chief Executive Officer, The Robert H. N. Ho Family Foundation

*Pauline Yu*
President, American Council of Learned Societies

**Keynote Address: Prospects for an International Network of Buddhist Studies**

*Donald Lopez*
Arthur E. Link Distinguished University Professor of Buddhist and Tibetan Studies, University of Michigan

See page 27 for bio.

**7:15—9:00pm**
**BUFFET SUPPER**
Sage Bistro—East Side
Wednesday

10:00—10:45am
Fellows’ Introductions

11:00—12:30pm
Panel 1
Moderator: Andrzej Tymowski, ACLS
Panelists: Catherine Prueitt, Emory University
          Frank Clements, University of Pennsylvania
Comment: Stephen F. Teiser, Princeton University

12:45—2:00pm
Lunch

2:00—3:30pm
Panel 2
Moderator: Steven Wheatley, ACLS
Panelists: Jason Protass, Stanford University
          Philip Friedrich, University of Pennsylvania
Comment: Jessica Main, UBC

4:00—5:30pm
Panel 3
Moderator: Donald Lopez, University of Michigan
Panelists: Stephanie Balkwill, McMaster University
          Cameron Penwell, University of Chicago
          Christina Kilby, University of Virginia
Comment: Lucia Dolce, University of London

6:30pm
Dinner

Thursday

10:00—11:30am
Panel 4
Moderator: Stephen F. Teiser, Princeton University
Panelists: Aleix Ruiz, Cambridge University
          Matthew Mitchell, Duke University
          Shiying Pang, UC Berkeley
Comment: James Benn, McMaster University
          Jinhua Chen, UBC

12:00—1:30pm
Panel 5
Moderator: James Benn, McMaster University
Panelists: Dylan Esler, Université de Louvain
          Douglas Gildow, Princeton University
Comment: Guang Xing, University of Hong Kong
          Donald Lopez, University of Michigan

1:30—2:30pm
Lunch

2:30—4:00pm
Panel 6
Moderator: Steven Wheatley, ACLS
Panelists: Luke Thompson, Columbia University
          Ethan Bushelle, Harvard University
Comment: Janet Gyatso, Harvard University

4:30—6:00pm
Concluding Roundtable
Senior scholars assess the field of Buddhist studies in
view of the two days of discussion and offer suggestions
for future collaborations and research
Moderator: Andrzej Tymowski, ACLS

6:00—7:00pm
Farewell Reception
Sage Bistro—East Side
ABSTRACT
My dissertation is a study of the contributions that women made to the early development of Chinese Buddhism during the Northern Wei Dynasty (386–534 CE). Working with the premise that Buddhism was patronized as a secondary arm of government during the Northern Wei, I argue that women were uniquely situated to play central roles in the development, expansion, and policing of this particular form of state-sponsored Buddhism, significantly contributing to its spread throughout East Asia, and that in so doing they gained increased social mobility and enhanced social status. To make this argument, I use approximately 100 largely unstudied inscriptions as my source data, because inscriptional material well documents the activities of female politicians, donors, and lay patrons.
**Three Sutras in the Sanskrit Dirghagama Manuscript**

**JIN KYOUNG CHOI**

Buddhist Studies
Ludwig Maximilians Universität München

ABSTRACT
The main theme of this research belongs to a category of Buddhist philology, especially early Indian Buddhist textual tradition recorded in Sanskrit. More precisely, this dissertation project is to transliterate three sutras of the Sanskrit manuscript of the Dirghagama, the “Collection of Long Discourses (of the Buddha),” transmitted by the (Mula-) Sarvativadins, which was one of the most powerful Buddhist sects in ancient India, and to create a critical edition, i.e., a reconstruction of the text, a translation and additional philological research on related sources in Pali, Classical Chinese and Tibetan.

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**The Joy of the Dharma: Esoteric Buddhism and the Early Medieval Transformation of Japanese Literature**

**ETHAN BUSHELLE**

Religion/Philosophy
Harvard University

ABSTRACT
My dissertation is a study of the role of ritual practice in the development of Buddhist poetics in medieval Japan. Through close readings of a variety of ritual texts—from manuals for the performance of esoteric rites to records of homiletic discourses for public liturgies—it elucidates the multiple ways that different Buddhist practices contributed to the transformation of theories of language, narrative, and poetry from the late ninth through twelfth centuries in Japan. By situating Buddhist poetics in the context of ritual practice, my dissertation offers a historically nuanced view of the sociocultural processes by which Buddhism defined, shaped, and recast what it meant to create literature in medieval Japan.
Northern Networks: The Range and Roles of the Dewa Sanzan Cult in Northern Japan

FRANK W. CLEMENTS

East Asian Languages and Civilizations
University of Pennsylvania

ABSTRACT
This project explores the religious cult associated with the Dewa Sanzan mountains in Northern Japan. Based in the mountain ascetic tradition known as Shugendo which combined esoteric Buddhism, Daoism, and Shinto, it was the region’s most important religious organization. Focusing on the sixteenth through the nineteenth centuries and emphasizing the cult’s Buddhist character, my research analyzes the parish system that linked centrally-located ascetic lineages with their parishioners and branch temples throughout Japan and it examines how these lineages defended their parish rights in conflicts with other religious organizations. I argue that maintaining and defending strong networks between the cult’s headquarters and parishes was crucial to its growth and success.

The Lamp for the Eye of Contemplation, the bSam-gtan mig-sgron by gNubs-chen Sangs-rgyas ye-shes: Hermeneutical Study, Translation and Critical Edition

DYLAN ESLER

Oriental Philology
Université catholique de Louvain

ABSTRACT
The thesis consists of an in-depth hermeneutical study of a 10th century Tibetan Buddhist text on the subject of contemplation, the bSam-gtan mig-sgron by gNubs-chen Sangs-rgyas ye-shes. This is a seminal text for our understanding of the meditative currents that existed in Tibet in the ninth and tenth centuries. It is the first indigenous Tibetan doxography and the first work to treat rDzogs-chen as a distinct vehicle. The thesis will include an unabridged annotated English translation and a critical edition of the Tibetan text (250 folios), as well as a historical introduction analysing the biographical information available for its author. The hermeneutical study will seek to explicate and to situate in a wider metaphysical context the principal points explored in the Tibetan text.
Regional Circulations and the Political Remaking of the Buddhasasana in Late-Medieval Sri Lanka

PHILIP FRIEDRICH

South Asia Studies
University of Pennsylvania

ABSTRACT
My dissertation will rethink the relationship between Buddhism and politics. I argue that scholarly reliance on theories of “legitimation” has obscured a more complex social history in which dispositional repertoires and affective vocabularies connected religious and political realms. I do so within the context of late-medieval Sri Lanka, where new modes of Buddhist religiosity marked the discursive practices of royal courts—specifically, worshipping both the Buddha and Hindu gods within a single ritual circuit. By analyzing literary and epigraphic representations of the practices by which royal courts were constituted as social actors, I will track how regional groups operating in Sri Lanka fundamentally altered the conditions under which one could claim to be a Buddhist regent.

Educating Chinese Buddhist Monastics in the People’s Republic of China: Seminaries, Academia, and the State

DOUGLAS GILDOW

Religion
Princeton University

ABSTRACT
This dissertation investigates the development and influence of modern seminary education on Buddhist monasticism within the People’s Republic of China. Seminaries first emerged in the early twentieth century as defense measures against government appropriation of Buddhist property, but other state policies later led to their extinction between 1949–1956 and 1966–1979. Since the post-Mao era Buddhist revival, however, from 1980 onwards, more than 40 seminaries have been established. This system of seminaries has transformed the modes and content of the knowledge and authority Buddhist institutions transmit. I argue that to understand the impact of Buddhism on seminaries, we must also understand how seminaries are influenced by state and academic institutions.
Epistolary Buddhism: Tibetan Letter-Writing Manuals and the Growth of Géluk Buddhism During the Qing

CHRISTINA KILBY
Religious Studies
University of Virginia

ABSTRACT
The objective of this dissertation is to investigate the early modern rise of the Géluk school of Tibetan Buddhism through the lens of epistolary culture. The Géluk school’s influence reached from Lhasa to Mongolia to the Qing Court in Peking; managing these long-distance Buddhist networks proved to be not only an administrative challenge, but also a scholastic one. Through their development of a Buddhist approach to letter-writing, Géluk scholar-monks literally set the terms by which Buddhist relationships among institutions, priests, and patrons would be articulated across vast geopolitical distances. This dissertation analyzes letters and letter-writing manuals produced by several of the most prominent Géluk scholars from the High Qing period (the long eighteenth century).

Beyond the Convent Walls: the Local and Japan-wide Activities of Daihongan’s Nuns in the Early Modern Period (c. 1550–1868)

MATTHEW MITCHELL
Religion
Duke University

ABSTRACT
My dissertation focuses on a group of Buddhist nuns of the Daihongan sub-temple of Zenkoji in Japan’s early modern period. While previous scholarship on nuns has focused on their emplacement within convents, I demonstrate that many groups of nuns were both grounded locally and involved in broader networks. Applying this hybrid methodology to unpublished temple documents, I highlight Daihongan’s local and national connections, conflicts and compromises with the monks of a rival sub-temple, travels throughout the country, network of branch temples, economic bases, and place within Buddhist hierarchies. This shows how nuns utilized Buddhist doctrine and practice to interact with both common and elite laypeople.
ABSTRACT

This dissertation analyzes how early-twentieth century Buddhist clergy theorized and implemented a Buddhist form of social work, both as a field of religious practice and as a means to demonstrate their religion’s continued significance for Japanese society. This research offers a critical historical context to the study of “engaged Buddhism” more generally by turning to the earliest sustained encounter between capitalist modernity and Buddhist institutions to examine how Japanese Buddhists delineated the ethical and practical terms of their social engagement in relation to urban poverty and labor unrest. It also argues that practitioners of Buddhist social work contributed to the creation of a legitimate space for religious participation in civil society in prewar Japan.

CAMERON PENWELL
Japanese History
University of Chicago

ABSTRACT

My dissertation is a preliminary study of the notion of “dharmakaya bodhisattva” in prajñaparamita literature and its commentary, with specific emphasis on the Dazhidu Lun (T.1509), one of the most important treatises in Chinese Buddhist history. In the DZDL, the dharmakaya-bodhisattvas are distinguished from the buddhas, the pratyekabuddhas and the arhats, bearing a distinct identity. I will analyze the doctrine on the rebirth of the dharmakaya-bodhisattva and methods for the attainment of the dharmakaya by this group of bodhisattvas. Furthermore, I will study the correspondence between Huiyuan and Kumarajiva. My study will reveal how Chinese Buddhist society in the fifth century understood and interpreted the doctrine of dharmakaya in relation to the cultivation of bodhisattvas.

SHIYING PANG
Chinese Buddhism
University of California
Berkeley

Seeking for the Dharma Body: A Preliminary Study on the Notion of Dharmakaya Bodhisattva in Prajñaparamita Literature and Its Commentary

The Emergence of Modern Buddhist Social Work in Twentieth-Century Japan
Poet-monk Daoqian (1043–1112):
Buddhist Monasticism and Social Poetry

JASON PROTASS

ABSTRACT
My dissertation focuses on 86 matched rhyme and other poems set against the life of their author, Buddhist poet-monk Daoqian (1043–1112). I examine tensions and synergies between Buddhism and poetry in five stages of Daoqian’s monastic career. Daoqian’s well-preserved body of work offers rich examples of how poetry functioned in the life of a Chinese monk. My analysis of social poetry, especially matched rhyme poetry, recontextualizes Buddhism in the intellectual and social history of the Song Dynasty. My previous research searched digital resources to reunite long-separated matched rhyme poems and restore Daoqian’s actual dialogues with other poets. These dialogues reveal the religious concerns and daily lives of monks and laymen in China’s Middle Period.

The Evolution of the Buddhist Apoha Theory of Concept Formation through Inter-Traditional Debate in Tenth and Eleventh Century Kashmir

CATHARINE PRUEITT

ABSTRACT
I examine the evolution of apoha in tenth- and eleventh-century Kashmir through a textual study of two key Buddhist and Saiva thinkers, Sankaranandana and Abhinavagupta. My inter-traditional approach allows a richer understanding of apoha than is possible by reading Buddhist works alone. I focus on a hotly contested aspect of apoha: whether or not the perceptual differentiation of subject from object is conceptual. Abhinava uses a definition of a concept subtly shifted from Dharmakirti’s original account and argues that subject/object duality is conceptual—even though Dharmakirti explicitly rejects this claim. Seeing if Sankarananadana’s work, on which Abhinava based his reading, suggests Abhinava’s reformulation elucidates whether or not this shift tracks a change within Dharmakirti’s own tradition.
ABSTRACT
My dissertation examines a devotional turn to Shakyamuni (the historical Buddha) in twelfth-century Japan and the transformation of Shakyamuni from an eternal buddha (which is how he was previously viewed) into a buddha who belonged to the past and to a distant land (India). Focusing on monks, texts, and rituals at the center of this trend, I argue that this turn was an attempt by Japanese Buddhists to (re)connect to what they envisioned as the source of their religious tradition. I further demonstrate that this new focus was a response to the increasing emphasis on the distant nature of that source, which was in turn a result of a new Japanese conception of history as a linear affair in which Japan existed at the geographical and temporal tail end of Buddhist transmission.
JAMES A BENN
Department of Religious Studies
McMaster University

RECENT RESEARCH INTERESTS

• Self-immolation
• Chinese Buddhist apocrypha
• The religious and cultural history of tea in China

RECENT PUBLICATIONS


Workshop Advisers
RECENT RESEARCH INTERESTS

• A translation (with Thupten Jinpa) of a refutation of the doctrines of emptiness and rebirth by the Jesuit missionary to Tibet, Ippolito Desideri (1684-1733)

• A study of the influence of the Lotus Sutra

• Translation of an eighteenth-century Tibetan compendium of Buddhist philosophy

RECENT PUBLICATIONS

• The Norton Anthology of World Religions: Buddhism. WW Norton, 2015.


**RECENT RESEARCH INTERESTS**

• Tibetan and South Asian cultural and intellectual history, including sex and gender in Buddhist monasticism, and the current female ordination movement in Buddhism

• Lineage, memory, and authorship

• The philosophy of experience

• Autobiographical writing in Tibet

• Animal Ways of Feeling and Knowing

**RECENT PUBLICATIONS**


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**STEPHEN F. TEISER**
Department of Religion
Princeton University

**RECENT RESEARCH INTERESTS**

• Silk Road, Dunhuang manuscripts

• Chinese Buddhist practice, interaction between Buddhism and Chinese culture

• Buddhist studies, discipline and theory in the humanities

**RECENT PUBLICATIONS**

• Curing with Karma: Healing Liturgies in Early Chinese Buddhism. Forthcoming.

• Yili yu fojiao yanjiu (Ritual and the Study of Buddhism). Forthcoming.


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**JANET GYATSO**
Harvard Divinity School
Harvard University

**RECENT RESEARCH INTERESTS**

• Tibetan and South Asian cultural and intellectual history, including sex and gender in Buddhist monasticism, and the current female ordination movement in Buddhism

**RECENT PUBLICATIONS**

• Curing with Karma: Healing Liturgies in Early Chinese Buddhism. Forthcoming.

• Yili yu fojiao yanjiu (Ritual and the Study of Buddhism). Forthcoming.


JINHUA CHEN
Department of Asian Studies
University of British Columbia

RECENT RESEARCH INTERESTS
• East Asian state-church relationships
• Monastic (hagio/)biographical literature
• Buddhist sacred sites and relic veneration
• Buddhism and technological innovation in medieval China

RECENT PUBLICATIONS

JESSICA MAIN
Department of Asian Studies
University of British Columbia

RECENT RESEARCH INTERESTS
• Modern Buddhist ethics, social action, and institutional life in East and Southeast Asia
• History of human rights and descent-based discrimination in Japanese True Pure Land, or Shin Buddhism
• Religion and health, investigating possible contributions of Buddhism to a physician’s ethic

RECENT PUBLICATIONS
• “Reformulating ‘Socially Engaged Buddhism’ as an Analytical Category.” The Eastern Buddhist 44 (2013): 1-34.
RECENT RESEARCH INTERESTS

• Early Buddhist philosophy
• Buddhist ethics, particularly the practice of filial piety
• Chinese Buddhist thought and practice
• Early Mahayana philosophy

RECENT PUBLICATIONS


GUANG, XING
Center of Buddhist Studies
The University of Hong Kong

THE ROBERT H. N. HO FAMILY FOUNDATION

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

Through its support of innovative programmes, 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 73 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.

Image Credit
Detail of 17th-century paintings in the Lama Lhakang, Trongsa Dzong
Courtauld Institute and the Department of Culture of Bhutan