

UK Association for Buddhist Studies

Summer online Conference 2020

Thursday 2 July 2020

Via ZOOM

- 9:45 - 10:10 Welcome – Cathy Cantwell
- Remembering Professor Karel Werner – Peter Harvey
- Remembering Professor Stefano Zacchetti – Christopher Jones
- Morning Session 1: Contemporary Buddhism and Globalisation – Nick Swann (chair)**
- 10:10 -10:30 am *Engaged Buddhism and Global Culture: Key Features of a Cross-Yānic and Transnational Social Philosophy* – Manu Ato-Carrera (SOAS, London)
- 10:30 -10:50 am *A New Frontier for Buddhism: Conceptual Relocation Within Western Science* – Stephen Gene Morris (University of Kent)
- 10:50 -11:10 am Break
- Morning Session 2: Ancient and Medieval Encounters within the Buddhist World – Janine Nicol (chair)**
- 11:10 - 11:30 am *Journeying to the West: The Image of the Western Regions in Shi Huijiao's Biographies of Eminent Monks* – Edward A. S. Ross (University of Reading)
- 11:30 - 11:50 am *Internal Politics or International Conspiracies? Buddhist Identities of Deities in Medieval Japan* – Emanuela Sala (SOAS, London)
- 11:50 - 12:45 pm Lunch Break
- 12:45 - 2:00 pm AGM

Afternoon Session: Chinese, Sanskrit and Textual Studies – Rhonwen Sawyer (chair)

- 2:00 - 2:20 pm *Language Contact and Grammatical Interference: Determining the Theoretical Framework for the Linguistic Analysis of Chinese Buddhist Translations* – Francesco Barchi (Ludwing Maximilian Universität Munich, Germany)
- 2:20 - 2:40 pm *Reconstructing A 9th-century Chinese-Sanskrit Manuscript in Edo Japan* – Diana Shuheng Zhang (University of Pennsylvania, USA)
- 2:40 - 3:00 Break

Late Afternoon Session: Contemporary Buddhism and Identity – Gregory Scott (chair)

- 3:00 - 3:20 pm *The Importance of Patriarchal Lineage and its Literary and Symbolic Expression in Korean Ch'önt'ae Buddhism* – Yohong Roh (Temple University, USA)
- 3:20 - 3:40 pm *The Gendered Aspect of Sōn (Korean Zen) Rhetoric in Europe and Other Accommodations* – John Ó Laoidh (National University of Ireland, Maynooth, Republic of Ireland)
- 3:40 - 4:00 pm *The Movement of Holiness and The Visual Analysis: The Four Faced Buddha in the Temples of Kuan-yin in Southern Vietnam* – Yunxia Wu (Lancaster University)
- 4:00 - 4:15 pm Break
- 4:15 - 5:00 pm Open Discussion chaired by Peter Harvey
- 5:00 pm End of Conference

Please register for the UKABS Conference:

The conference will use the virtual meeting app Zoom

Please note that **registration is required**. To register, [click on this link](#), which will lead you to our Eventbrite booking page. A link to the Zoom chat will be sent to the registered participants, along with a password, before the event.

The conference is completely free, but consider [making a donation](#) or [becoming a member of our association](#). Both would help us immensely with running UKABS.

UKABS 2020 – Abstracts

1. Contemporary Buddhism and Globalisation

Engaged Buddhism and Global Culture: Key Features of a Cross-Yānic and Transnational Social Philosophy

Manu Ato-Carrera: m_ato-carrera@soas.ac.uk

Since the emergence of the concept in the 1960s, engaged Buddhism is a term scholarly used to describe a variety of religious movements emphasizing the capital role of civic action in religion as their distinctive feature, to the extent of incorporating under this category other similar groups that existed from the late 19th century onwards. Moreover, this concept has been applied to a vast number of organizations in Asia and the West, and even to other modern religious expressions beyond the three *yānas*, such as Ambedkarite Buddhism.

In front of such a diverse panorama, it is worth exploring which type of civic action performed by a Buddhist group or individual falls under the criteria of engaged Buddhism. In that sense, this paper aims to offer a comprehensive definition of the concept and the key features of its social philosophy, which reveals a high consistency between their main representatives across the Buddhist *yānas*, despite the fact of coming from a plurality of parallel origins. For instance: Thich Nhat Hanh (Mahāyāna), Sulak Sivaraksa (Theravāda), and the XIV Dalai Lama (Vajrayāna), among others. In doing so, it is relevant to distinguish between engaged Buddhism as a general category from its stricter meaning related to the genesis of the concept and its further development.

Under these considerations, in a strict sense, engaged Buddhism's social philosophy appears as a post World War II phenomenon in a context of interaction with Western and global cultures, constituting a paradigm shift in contemporary Buddhist ethics, and characterized by seven key features: civic action-oriented; critical and hermeneutical; insightfully interdependent; spiritually-rooted; nonviolent and compassionate; interreligious and globally driven; and politically unbiased.

A New Frontier for Buddhism; Conceptual Relocation Within Western Science

Stephen Gene Morris: sgm34@kent.ac.uk

The history of Buddhism is rich with examples where its teachings and practices have crossed temporal, cultural and political frontiers, particularly in Asia. But, the successful migration of Buddhist knowledge has often been supported by the 'translation' of foundational tenets into frames of reference, culturally appropriate for the new audiences. The potential of Buddhist ideas to inspire a mass audience in the West is dependent on its location within a culturally relevant context. This paper describes how contemporary mindfulness can be seen as an attempt to translate Buddhist principles into a form consistent with the dominant norms and values of society. Further, positivist approaches in the study of meditation may indicate that contemporary Buddhist thinking is being changed by, but also acting as an agent of change upon the behavioural sciences.

2. Ancient and Medieval Encounters within the Buddhist World

Journeying to the West: The Image of the Western Regions in Shi Huijiao's Biographies of Eminent Monks

Edward A. S. Ross: e.a.s.ross@pgr.reading.ac.uk

Shi Huijiao's *Biographies of Eminent Monks* compiles the hagiographical accounts of over 500 Buddhist figures that lived in, or travelled through, China. These biographies are a major source for studying the migration of Buddhist sutras and sastras into China, describing the numerous journeys of Chinese and foreign monks to and from the Western Regions and India. At least one-third of these biographies describe expeditions over dangerous mountains, through treacherous valleys, and across deluging rivers. These travel descriptions also take note of the notable artefacts and groups that the Chinese Buddhists saw along their route, including the Buddha's footprints and stone bowl. Furthermore, the eminent figures from the Western Regions, like Buddhahadra and Guṇavarman, describe their acquaintances from their home countries in their biographies. These images are complemented by art found in the Mogao, Longmen, and Yungang Grottoes.

By looking at these descriptions and observations and comparing them to archaeological evidence from along the Silk Road, this paper will extrapolate how Shi Huijiao and Chinese Buddhists during the Liang Dynasty imagined and perceived the people and locales of the Western Regions. Through this research, we learn that even though the Chinese saw these monks as foreign, mysterious, and strange, they were fascinated by their knowledge, wisdom, and abilities.

Internal Politics or International Conspiracies? Buddhist Identities of Deities in Medieval Japan

Emanuela Sala: 633905@soas.ac.uk

Honji suijaku (original ground and manifest traces) is an expression which refers to the relationship between Buddhism and deities (*kami*) in Medieval and Pre-modern Japan. According to this relation, Buddhist deities (the *honji*, "original ground") choose to appear in Japan as "native" deities (performing *suijaku*, or "manifesting (their) traces") to convert and save a Japanese populace yet unprepared for the mental and emotional labour of Buddhist salvation.

The above description (and most scholarship) characterises *honji suijaku* as mostly a matter of "internal politics", which expresses the relation between universal entities (Buddhas and Bodhisattvas) and "native" ones (deities, or *kami*). Although medieval discourses related to deities were often used to pinpoint Japan's position in the world of Buddhist geography (intersecting but not overlapping with physical geography), *honji suijaku* is generally rationalised, in medieval narratives and scholarship alike, as a technology of salvation tailored especially for Japan.

In my talk I examine a text which re-dimensions this exclusivist narrative and, relating its origins, traces back the birth of *honji suijaku* to an international conspiracy, cutting across Asian borders and involving a veritable spy ring composed of various Chinese emperors, ministers and scholars from China and Japan, and even lofty personalities such as Confucius and Laozi. I follow this story and read it against parallel textual material to reflect on how Japanese religious narratives reached out to China, successfully appropriating and "nationalising" existing models of religious interaction.

3. Chinese, Sanskrit and Textual Studies

Language Contact and Grammatical Interference: Determining the Theoretical Framework for the Linguistic Analysis of Chinese Buddhist Translations

Francesco Barchi: barchi.francesco@outlook.it

The Chinese Buddhist translations are an outstanding source of information regarding the linguistic dimension of Early Middle and Middle Chinese; in the last three decades this typology of texts has increasingly gained the attention among various scholars from different fields. One of the most interesting aspect of these texts is that the language presents some grammatical features which appear only significantly later in not-translated texts (in particular in the Tang bianwen). Different hypotheses have been proposed to explain the emergence of these grammatical features at such an early stage: they were described either as the surfacing of vernacular elements in the language of the translations, since the Buddhist texts had less rigid stylistic constraints than texts written in Literary Chinese, or as the product of grammatical interference with the Indian original source-texts of the translations. The Sanskrit-interference hypothesis has been enthusiastically supported especially by Chinese scholars and many articles have been dedicated to this issue. This hypothesis, at least as formulated by its proponents, presents however a series of flaws concerning the mechanisms of linguistic interference (as inferred by the observation of interference phenomena in modern languages), as well as the linguistic status of the so-called “Buddhist Hybrid Chinese” and the methodology employed in the collection of the Chinese data used as the sample of the analysis. In my presentation I will try to outline a more plausible scenario in which the possible phenomena of grammatical interference between Sanskrit and Chinese might have occurred at this stage.

Reconstructing A 9th-century Chinese-Sanskrit Manuscript in Edo Japan

Diana Shuheng Zhang: zshuheng@sas.upenn.edu

This paper examines the little studied history of the eighteenth-century Japanese transmission, textual restoration, and printing reproduction of the 9th-century bilingual Chinese-Sanskrit manuscript, “A Thousand-Character-Text in Sanskrit.” The manuscript corresponds to the text as it appears in Taishō Tripiṭaka 2133A. Its content is attributed to the famous seventh-century Chinese Buddhist pilgrim Yijing with the purpose of helping Chinese people who wished to go to India to study Buddhist scholarship equip themselves with fundamental Indic-Chinese translation ability. Part of a broader culture of Siddham-Chinese lexicographical compositions in the seventh century amid increasing pilgrimages from China to India, this text served a double purpose: as primer for Sanskrit lexicon and Siddham script and a basic encyclopaedic introduction to knowledge about India.

The Sanskrit Siddham material is juxtaposed with a Chinese equivalent. Written in verse with the aim of using 1,000 different characters without repetition, the manuscript became trilingual in the 10th century. Apparently, a century after its transmission into Japan by the monk Ennin, the original manuscript acquired a Japanese gloss in the katakana syllabary. Secluded in both China and Japan for the next millennium, eighteenth-century Japanese Tendai monk Jakumyō spent nineteen years emending and reconstructing it. This led to the text’s first printed edition, a blockprint published in 1727 in Kyōto. Half a century later in 1773, another Tendai monk Keikō revised Jakumyō’s work and created an annotated, trilingual, Sanskrit-Chinese-Japanese printed edition in 1773. Understanding how the text was transmitted in Japan is crucial to modern criticism of the text.

4. Contemporary Buddhism and Identity

The Importance of Patriarchal Lineage and its Literary and Symbolic Expression in Korean Ch'önt'ae Buddhism

Yohong Roh: tug73650@temple.edu

Since a new Korean Buddhist movement called Ch'önt'ae Jong 天台宗 (Tiantai school) was founded by the Korean monk Sangwöl (1922-1974) in 1967, Sangwöl's group had emphasized that the modern Ch'önt'ae school is a rightful historical successor to Üich'ön's prior establishment of a Ch'önt'ae jong under Koryö a thousand years earlier.

The aim of this paper is to explore the multiple ways in which the figure of Sangwöl has been presented as a "Tiantai patriarch" in transcending geographical and temporal boundaries.

The modern Ch'önt'ae school has appropriated traditional patriarchal narratives and symbolism of the Chinese Tiantai tradition to make a connection not only between Sangwöl and Üich'ön, the founder of the Ch'önt'ae Buddhism in the Koryö Korea, but also, more distantly, between Sangwöl and the founding Chinese Tiantai patriarch, Zhiyi. In the absence of evidence for a concrete person-to-person connection, modern Ch'önt'ae scholars and clergy have turned to Sangwöl's leaping of historical time and geographical distance through Sangwöl's enlightenment to the Lotus Sūtra and encounter with the historical Ch'önt'ae texts. Even though Üich'ön, Sangwöl and other Ch'önt'ae patriarchs are separated distantly from one another by time and space, they became linked in the hagiographical imagination of later Ch'önt'ae Buddhists and modern Ch'önt'ae scholars. Thus, although the historical efforts and impact of Üich'ön and Sangwöl are completely unrelated to one another, these figures became linked in the historical imagination of later—predominantly contemporary—Buddhists. The paper will also address creation of rituals for patriarchal death anniversaries, construction of visual architecture and images.

The Gendered Aspect of Sōn (Korean Zen) Rhetoric in Europe and Other Accommodations

John Ó Laoidh: JOHN.OLAOIDH.2019@MUMAIL.IE

Since accommodations and creolizations led to its implantation on the Korean Peninsula over 1600 years ago, Korean Buddhism has been very much at the center of East-Asian Buddhist culture and inspired significant counter-flows which influenced Buddhist-thought and practice in China and as far west as Tibet. The modern period has resulted in continued changes and adaptations as 'Korean' Buddhism has begun expanding rhizomatically in the countries of Western Europe since the late 1970s.

Along with a brief overview of what Korean Buddhist culture there is currently across Europe (as represented by Kwan Um, Won Buddhist, Jogye & T'aego Order as well as independent centres and temples) and then drawing on fieldwork conducted at Korean Buddhist sites in Germany and Poland in 2018, this paper attempts to outline the accommodations and adaptations currently being made by a plurality of Korean Buddhisms in Europe such as a more prominent role for female Buddhist teachers and a change in the traditionally male-centered role and function of Korean Sōn/ Zen rhetoric. Where in some cases accommodations have involved an attempted de-Koreanization, this paper finally asks what an emerging fluidity of approach might mean for what has sometimes been regarded as a rigidly defined national school of East-Asian Buddhism.

The Movement of Holiness and The Visual Analysis: The Four Faced Buddha in the Temples of Kuan-yin in Southern Vietnam

Yunxia Wu: chuonchuon66@yahoo.com

Compared with North Vietnam, the Mekong Delta region is a new land in Vietnam's territory, as it was a part of Khmer Empire. During my field work in South Vietnam, I visited three special temples for worshipping bodhisattva Kuan-yin (Avalokitesvara) and coincidentally the three temples were also attractive for visitors or tourists who came to pray to the Four Faced Buddha for good fortune. Two of these Kuan-yin temples were constructed by ethnic Chinese Hakka in Ho Chi Minh City, the third one is located in the southernmost province, Bac Lieu, and was developed with the economic support from overseas Vietnamese.

In Mahayana Buddhist sutra, Kuan-yin is the powerful bodhisattva who can hear the cries for help and offer effective salvation beyond racial differences. In the context of South Vietnam, the worship of Kuan-yin by Hakka Chinese and overseas Vietnamese has been closely linked to their geographical mobility and the possible refusal to worship the local deities of the host places. However, the local people (Vietnamese, Khmer) are more familiar with the tradition of mother goddess and Hindu-Buddhism.

The Four Faced Buddha was recognized as the Indian deity, Brahma, whose four faces and eight arms manifest the outstanding knowledge and power. It is known in Vietnam as Thai Buddha, while its popularity in South Vietnam is based on a narrative of a change of fortune through the ethnic Chinese community.