UKABS 2023 CONFERENCE

NEGOTIATING BOUNDARIES

21-23 June 2023, University of St Andrews, Scotland

University of St Andrews | FOUNDED 1413

UKABS
UK Association for Buddhist Studies

St Andrews
Encyclopaedia of Theology

Photo: Ānandajoti Bhikkhu

PROGRAMME
&
ABSTRACTS

Welcome to UKABS Conference 2023

The United Kingdom Association for Buddhist Studies, with support from the University of St Andrews and the St Andrews Encyclopaedia of Theology, are delighted to welcome you to one of the first ever Buddhist Studies conferences at the University of St Andrews. The University of St Andrews is situated within a picturesque town, on Scotland's stunning east coast. Founded in 1413, St Andrews is Scotland's oldest university, and today one of the leading universities in the UK.

For the conference, Negotiating Boundaries in Buddhism and Buddhist Studies, we are pleased to be welcoming over seventy-five speakers - scholars and postgraduates - from around the world. Panels and papers will be on a breadth of topics that fall within the rubric of 'negotiating boundaries'. There will be panels and papers on different aspects of Buddhist doctrine and Buddhist traditions, as well as on interactions and exchange. Academics from both within Buddhist Studies and without will share their research on assumed boundaries within and between schools of Buddhism, on aspects of ritual and practice that cross thresholds between one religion and other, on Buddhism's and Buddhist influences – ancient and modern – within the realms of art, law, culture, politics and science.

If before, during, or after the conference you require any further information or assistance please do not hesitate to contact us via email at UKABS@st-andrews.ac.uk

UKABS 2023 Conference Organising Committee:

Dr Elizabeth Harris (University of Birmingham), President of UKABS
Dr Nick Swann (University of South Wales), UKABS Secretary
Prof. Alice Collett (University of St Andrews)
Dr Nic Newton (University of St Andrews)

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Venue: School 3, St Salvator's Quadrangle

15:30 – 16:30   Buddhists Engaging at the UN
Venue: School 3, St Salvator's Quadrangle

17:00 – 18:00   KEYNOTE: John Makransky
Venue: Younger Hall

19:00 – LATE   Lives of the Buddha, A Staged Reading of Alan Wagner's play.
Venue: The Byre Theatre. Ticketed Event.

DAY 2 – THURSDAY 22ND JUNE

		School 3 Lecture Theatre	School 5 Lecture Theatre	Irvine Lecture Theatre	Forbes Laboratory
		St Salvator's Quadrangle	St Salvator's Quadrangle	Irvine Building	Irvine Building
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10:00 – 10:15		Comfort & Transit Break			
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11:15 – 12:00		Morning Break and Monastic Lunch. Marquee, St Salvator's Quadrangle			
12:00 – 13:00	Session 3	Buddhist, Buddhicized, and un-Buddhist Narrative, Part 1	UKABS Post-Graduate Panel, Part 1	Body, Mind, and Health, Part 1	Buddhism and Politics
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15:45 – 16:45	Session 5	KEYNOTE: Natalie Gummer	Tea and Coffee available in the Marquee, St Salvator's Quadrangle		
17:00 - 18:00.	Session 6	UKABS Annual General Meeting			
18:15 - 19:45		EUARE Gala Dinner			
20:00 - Late		Cham Performance by the Tashi Lhunpo Monks. Younger Hall. Ticketed Event.			

DAY 3 – FRIDAY 23RD JUNE

		School 3 Lecture Theatre	School 5 Lecture Theatre	Irvine Lecture Theatre	Forbes Laboratory
		St Salvator's Quadrangle	St Salvator's Quadrangle	Irvine Building	Irvine Building
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11:15 – 12:00		Morning Break and Monastic Lunch. Marquee, St Salvator's Quadrangle			
12:00 – 13:00	Session 3	Texts, Language, and Literature 3	Education, Part 1	Philosophy	Image and Identity
13:00 – 14:30		Main Lunch. Marquee, St Salvator's Quadrangle			
14:30 – 15:30	Session 4	Texts, Language, and Literature 4	Education, Part 2	Sex, Sexuality, and Asceticism	Buddhist Archaeology
15:30 – 15:45		Comfort & Transit Break			
15:45 – 16:45	Session 5	KEYNOTE: Ute Hüsken	Tea and Coffee available in the Marquee, St Salvator's Quadrangle		
16:45 – 17:00	Session 6	UKABS Closing Plenary			

17:00 – 18:00   EUARE Keynote. Diwakar Acharya, Knowing and Thinking the Ultimate in Hindu Theology. Younger Hall.

18:00 – 19:00   Sand Maṇḍala Closing Ritual by the Tashi Lhunpo Monks. Old Union Diner / Procession to Seashore.

PROGRAMME

DAY 1 – WEDNESDAY 21ST JUNE

REGISTRATION OPEN
St Salvator's Quadrangle
11.00 - 18.00

15:00

School 3 Lecture Theatre

UKABS Welcome Address

15:30

School 3 Lecture Theatre

Introductory Panel: *Buddhists Engaging at the UN: Environmental Policy Efforts*

Grove Harris and Guests

17:00 – 18:00

Younger Hall

KEYNOTE

John Makransky (Boston College)

Buddhist Constructive Reflection Past and Present: Recurrent Reinterpretation in Meeting New Cultural Needs and Challenges

19:00

The Byre Theatre

Lives of the Buddha: A Staged Reading of Alan Wagner's play

DAY 2 – THURSDAY 22ND JUNE

09:00 – 10:00 Session 1

School 3 Lecture Theatre

Hidden in Plain Sight: Porous Boundaries in Theravada Buddhism, Part 1

Ven. Medagampitiye Wijithadhamma (University of Sri Jayawardhenapura)

Reaching Across Time: The Commentary on the Chronicle of the Future

Kate Crosby (University of Oxford)

Reaching Across the Mind-Body Divide: Physical Technologies in Pre-modern Theravada Meditation

School 5 Lecture Theatre

Engaged Buddhism / Buddhism and Violence 1

Donna L. Brown (University of Manitoba)

A Queen and King Dethroned? Reconsidering the Limits on Engaged Buddhism

Peter Lehr (University of St Andrews)

Liminal Spaces: Negotiating the Boundaries between Non-Violence and Violence in Burmese Buddhism

Irvine Lecture Theatre

Buddhist Practice, Part 1

Graeme Nixon (University of Aberdeen)

Lost Horizons? The Emergence and Contested Nature of Secular Mindfulness

Kittipong Vongagsorn (Ludwig-Maximilian University of Munich)

Blurring the Boundary between Linguistics and Soteriology: Lexical Analysis as a Tool for Meditative Practice

Forbes Laboratory

Boundaries in Japanese Buddhism

Rein Raud (Tallinn University)

Religion or Philosophy? Reflections on Dōgen's Zen

Haruka Saito (SOAS)

Chanting as Translating Buddhist Thoughts in Medieval Japan

Shodhin K. Geiman (Valparaiso University)

This Earth Where We Stand is the Pure Lotus Land': Revisiting the Purported Boundary between Zen and Pure Land Buddhism

10:15 – 11:15 Session 2

School 3 Lecture Theatre

Hidden in Plain Sight: Porous Boundaries in Theravada Buddhism, Part 2

Pyi Phyo Kyaw (Shan State Buddhist University)

Straddling the Porous Boundary of Passive-Active Mental States: The Significance of the bhavaṅga *in Meditation*

Olivia Porter (King's College)

Hidden in Plain Sight: How the 'Heretical' Zawti Tradition Preserved its Orthodox Practices

School 5 Lecture Theatre

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Sam Pehrson (University of St Andrews)

Tibetan Exiles' Accounts of Resistance to China: Buddhism, Identity, Truth and Morality

Tim Stephens (University of the Arts London)

Practice Research: Secular Buddhist Ethics in Art and Design Education

Irvine Lecture Theatre

Buddhist Practice, Part 2

Heather Clydesdale (Santa Clara University)

Buddhist Art as Experience and Transformation

Catherine Hardie (Hong Kong Baptist University)

On Return to China: Han Chinese Monastic Practitioners of Tibetan Buddhism and the Practice of 'Strategic Hybridity'

Forbes Laboratory

Roundtable: Lives of the Buddha

Alan Wagner (CRCAO, Paris), Naomi Appleton (University of Edinburgh), Natalie Gummer (Beloit College), Jamie Cresswell (Centre for Applied Buddhism), and Elizabeth Angowski (Earlham College)

12:00 – 13:00 Session 3

School 3 Lecture Theatre

Buddhist, Buddhicized, and un-Buddhist Narrative, Part 1

Elizabeth Angowski (Earlham College)

The Seductions of Sacrifice: On Reading the Jātaka*s for Pleasure*

Natasha Mikles (Texas State University)

The Dharma of Warrior-Kings and Talking Horses: Treasuring Buddhist Popular Literature

Erin Burke (University of Virginia)

A Tale of Gods and Men: Re-Imaging Approaches to Tibetan Buddhism Through Cone Yum Tsering's Short Story, 'The Meeting of Mountain Gods' (lha gnyen gros tshogs)

School 5 Lecture Theatre

UKABS Post-Graduate Panel, Part 1

Shengnan Dong (SOAS)

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Edward A S Ross (University of Reading)

Bringing the Dharma over Mountains: Buddhist Transmission Activity and the Hindukush-Karakoram Mountain Range

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Ayurvedic Mindfulness: Buddhist Health and Healing in Vietnam

Mathew Aldridge (King's College London)

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Forbes Laboratory

Buddhism and Politics: Historical Questions and Emerging Approaches

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Paul Fuller (University of Edinburgh)

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Nan Ouyang, (Ghent University)

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Saul Tobias (California State University, Fullerton)

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Bernat Font (University of Bristol)

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James E. Willis, III (University of Indianapolis)

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15:45 – 17:00

School 3 Lecture Theatre

KEYNOTE

Natalie Gummer (Beloit College)

Reading in a Ritual Cosmos, and Other Lessons on Blurring Boundaries from Buddhist

Literature

20:00 – 22:00

Younger Hall

Event

Cham Performance by the Tashi Lhunpo Monks

DAY 3 – FRIDAY 23RD JUNE

09:00 – 10:00 Session 1

School 3 Lecture Theatre

Texts, Language, and Literature 1

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Sajal Barua (The University of Hong Kong)

Anupādā parinibbāna *and the Paths of Practice Leading to its Attainment*

Stefan Karpik (Independent)

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School 5 Lecture Theatre

Modern and Western Encounters, Part 1

Elizabeth J. Harris (University of Birmingham)

Narrating the Transmission of Buddhism to Britain: Negotiating Boundaries between the Esoteric and Rationalism

Isabel Jacobs (Queen Mary University of London)

Alexandre Kojève and Buddhism

Irvine Lecture Theatre

Across Lineages, Schools, and Religions, Part 1

Alexander Soucy (Saint Mary's University)

The Twentieth Century Sectarianisation of Buddhism in Vietnam

Rachel Pang (Davidson College)

The Negotiation of Nyingma-Geluk Sectarian Boundaries in the Rebgong Valley, 17th to 19th Centuries

Forbes Laboratory

Teaching and Researching from an Interdisciplinary Perspective: The MA in Buddhist Art History and Conservation at The Courtauld, Part 1

Irina Zhambaldorzhieva (The Courtauld Institute of Art)

Pearl Jackson-Payen (The Courtauld Institute of Art)

Sujatha Meegama (The Courtauld Institute of Art)

10:15 – 11:15 Session 2

School 3 Lecture Theatre

Texts, Language, and Literature 2

M. K. Edwards Leese (Independent)
Reflecting on the Śākyabhikshus: Building on L. S. Cousins' Proposal

Tiantian Cai (University of Wisconsin-Madison)
Quoting as Curating: The Laṅkāvatāra Sūtra *as Cited for Teachings of Meditation in the Great Debate of bSam yas*

School 5 Lecture Theatre

Modern and Western Encounters, Part 2

Georgios T. Halkias (The University of Hong Kong)
From Borders to Bordering: Buddhism in the Eastern Himalayas

Maria Sharapan (University of Jyväskylä)
Constructing a Flexible Tibetan Buddhism

Irvine Lecture Theatre

Across Lineages, Schools, and Religions, Part 2

Harsha Gautam (The University of Texas at Austin)
Gods without Worshippers: Religious Boundary-Making in Mathura

Sarah K. Pinnock (Trinity University, San Antonio, Texas)

Crossing Holocaust Boundaries: Zen Peacemakers in Auschwitz-Birkenau

Forbes Laboratory

Teaching and Researching from an Interdisciplinary Perspective: The MA in Buddhist Art History and Conservation at The Courtauld, Part 2

Aiken Unni (The Courtauld Institute of Art)

Liutong Yi (The Courtauld Institute of Art)

Lori Wong (The Courtauld Institute of Art)

12:00 – 13:00 Session 3

School 3 Lecture Theatre

Texts, Language, and Literature 3

Martin A. Mills (University of Aberdeen)

Boundaries or Hierarchies? Cultural Incorporation in the Narratives of Tibetan Imperial Templecraft

Hélène de Brux (LMU Munich / EPHE Paris)

The Inner and Outer Bounds of Buddhist Conversion

School 5 Lecture Theatre

Education, Part 1

Nick Swann (University of South Wales)

Play and Pedagogy in Buddhist Studies

Nicholas S. Hobhouse (University of Hong Kong)

A Division Worth Upholding? Three Nyingma Approaches to Negotiating the Boundary between Traditional Monastic Colleges (bshad grwa) and Modern Universities in India

Irvine Lecture Theatre

Philosophy

Dobdon Maksarov (SOAS)

A Stepwise Layered Approach Using the Concept of Emptiness as Interpreted by Kunkyen Jamyang Shepda (1648-1721)

Taryn Sue (University of Chicago)

Exploring the Boundaries of Buddhist Logic: Challenges and Opportunities

Allan Furic (University of Edinburgh)

In Search of the Whole: Intuiting Reality in Quantum Mechanics and Buddhist Philosophy

Forbes Laboratory

Image and Identity

Jill Sudbury (Independent)

Buddha, Dharma and TikTok: Lamas, the Sangha and Social Media

14:30 – 15:30 Session 4

School 3 Lecture Theatre

Texts, Language, and Literature 4

Jesse Pruitt (University of Toronto)

The Redescription of Buddhism by Modern Tamiḻ Śaivas

Gregory Adam Scott (University of Manchester)

Marking Boundaries in the Buddhist Publishing World of Republican China

Xiaoqiang Meng (Leiden University)

Is Asura a Cursed Being? Buddhist and Jain Cosmologies in Contest

School 5 Lecture Theatre

Education, Part 2

Rusha Jin (University of Edinburgh)

Buddhists Study in a Buddhist Studies Course: On the Training Course for Religious Groups Organized by the Renmin University of China

Irvine Lecture Theatre

Sex, Sexuality, and Asceticism

Hin Sing Yuen, Luu Zörlein and Sven Walter (Osnabrück University)

Mononormativity, Compersion, and the Four Immeasurables

Amnuaypond Kidpromma and James Taylor (Chiang Mai University)

"Ladyboys" (katoey) in the Renunciant World: Religious Experiences of Thai Transgendered People in Northern Thailand

Antony Fiorucci (Uppsala University)

Demarking the Middle in the Pali Vinaya

Forbes Laboratory

Buddhist Archaeology

Ziyi Shao (SOAS)

Iconography in Communications: The Six Stupas in Fanhualou

Ishani Sinha (SOAS)

Exploring Boundaries of Buddhist Archaeology: Re-evaluating the Identification of Ajatashatru Stupa through Recent Excavations at Rajgir

15:45 – 16:45

School 3 Lecture Theatre

KEYNOTE

Ute Hüsken (Heidelberg University)

Boundaries Within: Local and Transcultural Efforts to Re-establish the Theravāda Bhikkhunīsaṃgha

School 3 Lecture Theatre

UKABS Closing Plenary

Old Union Diner

Sand Maṇḍala Closing Ritual

Tashi Lhunpo Monks

N.B. The closing ritual will be followed by a procession down to the beach to deposit some of the sand into the North Sea.

ABSTRACTS

DAY 1 – WEDNESDAY 21ST JUNE

KEYNOTE

Buddhist Constructive Reflection Past and Present: Recurrent reinterpretation in meeting new cultural needs and challenges

John Makransky (Boston College)

Within the academic study of religion, Buddhist critical-constructive reflection (also sometimes called "Buddhist theology") has had two goals: (1) To draw on academic disciplines, together with Buddhist resources, to newly inform Buddhism in normative ways, and (2) to draw on Buddhism to address personal and social needs and to newly inform modern academic disciplines, such as philosophy, ecology, psychology, cognitive science, theories of justice, and economics. While academic work in Religious Studies is etic and descriptive, Buddhist critical-constructive reflection (BCCR) draws on those etic findings, together with emic Buddhist understandings, to suggest new normative directions for Buddhism, society and academia. BCCR, then, treats Buddhism not just as a source of data for theorization in the Western academy, but as a partner in rethinking issues, questions, and disciplines. This talk will discuss the rise of BCCR in the modern academy, the needs it addresses, and how analogues of its two goals have been operative throughout Buddhist history in Asia and the West—Buddhism newly informing and affecting each culture as it is informed and affected by it. Some current applications of BCCR in light of that history will be discussed, e.g. how the doctrine of skillful means has been used both to enable and to hide such Buddhist cultural syntheses; how that suggests the need for greater intra-Buddhist and inter-religious dialogue today; how modern Buddhists are drawing on Buddhist resources together with social and natural sciences to respond to personal, social, political and environmental problems, and how that also sheds new light on Buddhism and on those disciplines. As modern Buddhism makes contributions in these ways, it also risks succumbing too much to modern assumptions and values, which may reduce its ability to offer important alternatives to them. Possible examples of this will also be noted.

INTRODUCTORY PANEL

Buddhists Engaging at the UN: Environmental Policy Efforts

Grove Harris and Guests

This roundtable discussion will focus on Buddhist engagement in UN policy and efforts towards a sustainable climate and liveable planet. As the UN ramps up through a particularly intense and pivotal year, processes discussed will include the UNFCCC (climate COP- (conference of the parties)), the convention on biodiversity, the UN environmental program and more. Religious NGOs (non-governmental organizations) collaborate in these policy spaces, often as multifaith or interfaith coalitions, offering values-based perspectives in the secular multilateral process. The panel with comprise seasoned advocates from major engaged Buddhism organizations, who will discuss outcomes to date, obstacles towards needed changes and full implementation, and how their Buddhist perspectives and practices inform, motivate, and sustain their work. This discussion will be open to audience questions and participation, particularly from other Buddhists active in influencing the UN.

Organised by Grove Harris, UN Representative and Director of Global Advocacy for the Temple of Understanding, one of the world's oldest interfaith organizations.

DAY 2 – THURSDAY 22ND JUNE

KEYNOTE

Reading in a Ritual Cosmos, and Other Lessons on Blurring Boundaries from Buddhist Literature

Natalie Gummer (Beloit College)

In this presentation, I develop and demonstrate a method of reading derived from Mahāyāna sūtras and the broader ancient South Asian cosmology in which they were initially composed and compiled. The act of "reading" (broadly conceived) is conditioned by cultural, historical, linguistic, and cosmological assumptions and ideals—about the nature of language and text, but also about the relationship of language and text to persons and their bodies, and to the normative ideals towards which they aspire. Different "cosmologies of reading" assume and encourage different interpretive methods. The method I develop here, which has roots in the sacrificial cosmology that informs the sūtras, challenges any clear-cut boundary between the ostensibly separate categories of literature and ritual, text and practice, speech acts and bodily acts. What might contemporary scholarly boundaries prevent us from seeing in and about Buddhist literature? And how might alternative interpretive methods offer critical resources not only for reading Buddhist literature, but also for recognizing and rethinking cosmologies rooted in European colonialism and universalism?

PANELS AND PRESENTERS

Hidden in Plain Sight: Porous Boundaries in Theravada Buddhism

Reaching Across Time: The Commentary on the *Chronicle of the Future*

Ven. Medagampitiye Wijithadhamma (University of Sri Jayawardhenapura)

Reaching Across the Mind-Body Divide: Physical Technologies in Pre-modern Theravada Meditation

Kate Crosby (University of Oxford)

Straddling the Porous Boundary of Passive-Active Mental States: The Significance of the *bhavaṅga* in Meditation

Pyi Phyo Kyaw (Shan State Buddhist University)

Hidden in Plain Sight: How the 'Heretical' Zawti Tradition Preserved its Orthodox Practices

Olivia Porter (King's College)

The panel Hidden in Plain Sight examines, in relation to Theravada, porous boundaries in time, between mental and physical, between active and resting mind, between practitioner and scholar, inclusion and exclusion, orthodox and heterodox. We examine how pre-modern practitioners negotiated across time and sought to construct the future in times of crisis, with an examination of an untranslated commentary of the *Anāgatavaṃsa*: *Samantabhaddikā* (Wijithadhamma). We continue with pre-modern meditators navigating between the realm of physicality and consciousness in meditation, drawing on models of change in physical sciences (Crosby). Then we examine the bhavaṅga, the resting mind that forms the boundary between active states of mind, and between this life and the next. Holding an important place in meditation traditions of Thailand and Burma, we see how it is differently interpreted in various practice traditions and between those who identify as practitioners or as scholars (Kyaw). Finally, we look to the Zawti sect of Burma-China, hitherto undocumented by outsiders. We follow how it has for centuries protected its rigorous monastic and lay practices by negotiating its marginal status, through its migratory habits in pre-colonial and colonial periods, and currently by keeping its numbers low to avoid absorption into the centrally regulated mainstream Burmese monastic education system (Porter). Each paper raises ways in which perceived boundaries may be porous: the future in the present; the mutual constructing of mind, mentality, and physicality; the temporal sciences as a core feature of Buddhist spiritual practices; bhavaṅga as the passive, resting state of mind and as the pure, luminous mind; scholars as practitioners and practitioners as scholars; 'orthodoxy' as lax and 'heresy' as orthodox, lay practitioners as the experts in Buddhist ritual and texts. All papers turn our attention to aspects of Theravada that have been hidden in plain sight and the porous nature of the constructed boundaries that have obscured them.

Engaged Buddhism / Buddhism and Violence 1

A Queen and King Dethroned? Reconsidering the Limits on Engaged Buddhism

Donna L. Brown (University of Manitoba)

This paper interrogates certain limits set around what is considered to be engaged Buddhism by scholars dating back to the 1990s and seeks to show that these limits should be set aside to allow terms like "engaged Buddhism" and "Buddhist social engagement" to apply to all Buddhists' ways of materially helping others.

In 2022, two publications sharply questioned what has been called the "consensus" on engaged Buddhism—a consensus put in place in the 1990s, mainly by Christopher Queen and Sallie B. King, that has dominated the study of Buddhists' socially-oriented activities ever since. The two publications, by Paul Fuller and Alexander Hsu, build on a groundswell of scholarship on engagement that dissents from, critiques, or discards the consensus. Fuller and Hsu propose new approaches to scholarship that break the boundaries set around what counts as Engaged Buddhism by the consensus, deeming diverse socially-oriented activities engaged, rather than a restricted set of activities undertaken only by certain kinds of Buddhists, such as modernist Buddhists. This paper summarizes the consensus picture of engaged Buddhism, its history, and dissenting voices. It offers reasons why critiques of the consensus through 2021 had little effect, and why Fuller's and Hsu's 2022 publications represent a turning point. It then recommends new areas of research on Buddhist social engagement that even Fuller and Hsu have overlooked, to arrive at an inclusive approach to studying all Buddhists' efforts to help others in material ways. Finally, it illustrates the presence of understudied and often unrecognized forms of engagement that deserve further study by highlighting the engagement of some of today's traditionalist Buddhists, offering examples of the engaged activities, and the doctrines supporting them, of one traditionalist transnational Buddhist organization, the Foundation for the Preservation of the Mahayana Tradition (FPMT).

Liminal Spaces: Negotiating the Boundaries between Non-Violence and Violence in Burmese Buddhism

Peter Lehr (University of St Andrews)

As an academic with an interest in religious violence in non-Abrahamic religions, there is one boundary that fascinates: the boundary between non-violence and violence in Theravāda Buddhism, with a focus on the role of monks as regards the upkeep of this 'boundary.'

During my research in Sri Lanka, Thailand and Burma, I found that there is no 'real' border between non-violence and violence. Rather, instead of an impenetrable border, I argue that there exists a liminal space between the 'white' of non-violence and the 'black' of violence. My paper explores this space, investigating the conditions required for a transition between non-violence to violence (and probably vice-versa), and the role of monks in this transition. The case study will be Burma, touching on the Saffron Revolution of 2007, the anti-Rohingya protests since 2011, and the current civil war between pro-regime and anti-regime forces. My focus will be on the role of the Burmese monks participating in these incidents.

My main arguments will be that a) Buddhist non-violence is not always an absolute value but a prima facie duty that can be overridden by more pressing issues; b) that when such 'more pressing issues' are perceived to be present, principled adherence to non-violence may give way to pragmatic acceptance that violence is unavoidable; and c) that Schmid's (2014) category of not-violent (defined as 'not us personally violent) situated between non-violent and violent helps to illuminate this transition in the liminal grey space between the white of non-violence and the black of violence. My conclusion will be that monks appear as fire starters, and part of a process that can well be called either 'stochastic violence' or 'stochastic terrorism' depending on the outcome.

Buddhist Practice

Lost Horizons? The Emergence and Contested Nature of Secular Mindfulness

Graeme Nixon (University of Aberdeen)

Mindfulness has become a cultural phenomenon. Mindfulness interventions have been introduced into multiple professional contexts including health care, business, sport, and education with claims for its virtuous effects including in areas such as stress relief; enhanced communication; better emotional intelligence; enhanced self-awareness; free will, and an increase in attainment. This paper considers these phenomena, seeking to address questions such as:

• What is the appeal of mindfulness at this time?

• To what extent can mindfulness be secular?

• How robust is the evidence for some of the claims for mindfulness?

• What are the criticisms of mindfulness?

This paper argues that mindfulness has a particular appeal to those within technologically advanced, increasingly secular and individualised societies. Arguably mindfulness is a manifestation of the needs of a disenchanted population who, having secularised clumsily, have turned uncritically to a sanitised form of spirituality and specifically an essentialised and sanitised form of Buddhism. Mindfulness and Buddhism have arguably been shaped to fit the needs of late capitalism.

This paper considers criticisms of mindfulness such as its commodification and deployment in corporate and military settings; critiques from religious communities, most prominently from Buddhist sources, and secular voices about cherry picking, indoctrination and misuse of mindfulness, and views that mindfulness may be a tool for pacification rather than empowerment and social action.

This paper is a chance to reflect on the extent to which mindfulness is or can be truly secular, and to consider the origins and purposes of mindfulness. The 'mindful revolution' can be considered a mirror by which to consider the social, economic, and ideological grounds for its appeal. Hopefully what emerges is a considered, critical, inclusive, and cautiously optimistic view of mindfulness and it's potential.

Blurring the Boundary between Linguistics and Soteriology: Lexical Analysis as a Tool for Meditative Practice

Kittipong Vongagsorn (Ludwig-Maximilian University of Munich)

Taking the example of "the contemplation of the Buddha" (P.*buddhānussati*/ Skt.*buddhānusmṛti*), this paper will reevaluate the boundary between linguistics and meditation as well as the importance of linguistic methods for Buddhist soteriological purpose. In the early Buddhist suttas, the Buddha suggests his disciples that they should practice "the contemplation of the Buddha". This contemplation is accompanied by a formula which starts with "*Iti pi so*" (thus, it is known as "*Iti pi so* formula"), and followed by nine (or ten, depending on the tradition) epithets of the Buddha. Even though he suggests this meditative practice to his disciples several times, he does not explain in detail how one should contemplate the Buddha by using the formula. There is no definite answer if one should only recite the formula while visualizing the Buddha or contemplate the meaning of each word in the formula. This lack of information from the Buddha himself creates a problem on the understanding of the practice. In this paper, I will explore an interpretation of this practice which is presented in the Visuddhimagga of Buddhaghosa. This interpretation comes from scholastic understanding. I argue that Buddhaghosa tries to break this boundary between scholastic duty (*ganthadhura*) and the practicing duty (*vipassnādhura*). He shows that scholastic methods such as the etymological analysis are significant for meditation practice and can help one to achieve their soteriological goal. The analysis can bring out both explicit and implicit meanings of each epithet in the mind of the practitioners. These epithets can bring out the entire Buddhology by means of etymologizing. His interpretation of the contemplation of the Buddha has continued throughout the history, as this paper will show the influence of Buddhaghosa's interpretation on modern-day meditation practice in Thailand.

Buddhist Art as Experience and Transformation

Heather Clydesdale (Santa Clara University)

This paper proposes considering Buddhist architecture, sculpture, and paintings in the context of cognitive studies and phenomenology. Using Mogao cave temple 254, situated outside of Dunhuang and dated to the early fifth century, I argue that we can understand Buddhist architecture beyond its capacity to accommodate rituals and Buddhist images apart from their function as illustrations of sutra or generators of karma for donors. Instead, architecture and images catalyze experiences that collapse the boundaries separating the phenomenal world from the consciousness of devotees. For instance, so-called "central pillar caves" like 254 not only support circumambulation but their layout and structure determine worshipers' trajectory and tempo so that they vicariously experience the cycle of death and rebirth that is the foundation of dukkha. This sequential experience of sense perception through movement enhances the meaning of Jātaka paintings, stories of Buddha's past lives that adorn the walls. Rather than viewing these singly and with detachment, the devotees' course through the temple stimulates stages of awareness that interact with their imaginations. This begins with expansion (viewers knit scenes into cohesive narratives), projection (viewers envision themselves in the stories), assimilation (viewers speculate how to model compassion in their lives), and, finally, fusion (viewers internalize the mindset of the Buddha). As devotees make repeated revolutions, the engagement of mind and senses with architecture and images layer upon one another, creating a destabilizing state that might culminate in a realization of emptiness or elevated consciousness. Likewise, the positioning of statues and broadening or narrowing of spaces at junctures within the cave temple compel devotees to stop in front of icons of buddhas or bodhisattvas, thus removing themselves from the otherwise relentless karmic revolutions. In these ways, structures, images, and objects ultimately transcend their independent material states and become internalized by the devotees.

On Return to China: Han Chinese Monastic Practitioners of Tibetan Buddhism and the Practice of 'Strategic Hybridity'

Catherine Hardie (Hong Kong Baptist University)

Over the past three decades, against a national backdrop of economic reform and religious revival, the regenerated world of Tibetan Buddhism inside the borders of the PRC has attracted the involvement of ethnic Han Chinese on an unprecedented scale. While the majority of this new Sinophone religious constituency comprises urban-based lay Buddhists, several large monastic centres on the Tibetan plateau have supported large and vibrant communities of Han Chinese monastic practitioners. Yet relatively few Han Chinese monastic practitioners who study and practise at these institutions do so on a permanent or lifelong basis. Whether due to political restrictions, health challenges or personal factors, after several years most Han Chinese monks and nuns eventually return to Han China. Many remain active in Dharma propagation not only through continuing to support the outreach activities of Tibetan lamas, but also through their own teaching, blogging, and institution-building activities in Han Chinese regions.

Based on long-term ethnographic research, this paper focuses on contemporary Han Chinese monastic practitioners who have spent considerable time residing at Tibetan Buddhist institutions in Tibetan regions. It explores their experiences navigating their return to life in Han Chinese areas and the "boundary work" they perform through their discourse and actions as they adapt to, and position themselves within, this new religious landscape – one that is institutionally and culturally dominated by Chinese Buddhism. Specifically, the paper seeks to understand how these monastic practitioners negotiate the synergies and frictions between the sutric-tantric and Sino-Tibetan poles of the contemporary PRC Mahayana milieu in their personal and outwardly-oriented religious lives. In a religious context that presents Han Chinese monastic practitioners of Tibetan Buddhism with both opportunities and challenges, it is suggested that many embrace 'strategic hybridity' as both a Dharmic ethos and survival tool.

Boundaries in Japanese Buddhism

Religion or Philosophy? Reflections on Dōgen's Zen

Rein Raud (Tallinn University)

In general, Western scholars of religious studies are willing to characterize as "religious" also such cultural phenomena that lack some of the core features of how "religion" has traditionally been understood in the Western context, while Western scholars of philosophy are reluctant to concede the status of philosophy to many of those non-Western thinkers and texts that fully correspond to any definitions of philosophy that would encompass the entirety of the Western canon. East Asian thought is a case in point. For example, "Confucianism" (i.e. the tradition of Ru and its derivates) is often listed in Western cultural histories as a religion, but denied the label of philosophy, even though it has more in common with the latter than the former.

An even more complicated case is Zen and the thought of the Japanese Zen thinker Dōgen (1200–53) in particular, as he has both been hailed as a philosopher by many modern Japanese and Western researchers, but also excluded from philosophy by almost as many others — some scholars have even supported both of these views at different times. In my paper, I will look at the arguments for and against treating Dōgen as a figure of "religious wisdom" and/or a philosopher, analyzing the features of Dōgen's text that have been foregrounded by the representatives of both sides in support of their respective positions.

I will argue that the opposition between religion and philosophy is actually irrelevant for Dōgen's thought itself, but only reflects the Western obsession with classifying non-Western cultural phenomena according to its own

schemes. As Dōgen's texts are meaningful and rewarding for philosophical engagement, it would be intellectually counterproductive to deny the legitimacy of their philosophical interpretation because of our cultural prejudices.

Chanting as Translating Buddhist Thoughts in Medieval Japan

Haruka Saito (SOAS)

This paper explores Buddhist chanting practices in Japan called *shōmyō* 声明. Specifically, I will analyse the Buddhist chanting techniques and how *shōmyō* has developed over time by being considered as a "voice of Buddha" and also as "sounds" creating a soundscape in rituals called *hōe* 法会 (literally "Buddhist assembly" or "Dharma assembly"). As part of this research, the relationship between chanting techniques and sensory experience in ritual will be explored; however, this will not necessarily capture how the audience considers the sound with particular effects, but rather focus on the way Japanese monks tried to develop chanting techniques as a crucial part of Buddhist practice and what kind of effects they aimed to create to appeal to the audience's emotion with the techniques in Mediaeval Japan. Physicality and sensory experience have been paid more attention than ever before in ritual studies. Recent scholarship on ritual has attempted to resolve dichotomies, what Robert Sharf called "distinctions between thought and action, the subjective and the objective, private and public, and inner and outer," which existed in the interpretative approach developed by earlier anthropologists (Sharf 2005:252). According to Catherine Bell, "ritualization is embedded within the dynamics of the body defined within a symbolically structured environment" (Bell 1992:93). Thus, I will investigate the dynamics of the human body for understanding how *shōmyō* creates both sound and emotional space. Furthermore, because Buddhist teachings have always been transmitted orally before writing, and the voice created by the human body is crucial to the transmission process, I would also like to explore the power of hearing sounds based on how Japanese monks considered Buddhist sounds by applying both textual and hermeneutical approaches.

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'This Earth Where We Stand is the Pure Lotus Land': Revisiting the Purported Boundary between Zen and Pure Land Buddhism

Shodhin K. Geiman (Valparaiso University)

The lines between Zen and Pure Land Buddhism seem to be rather clearly drawn. The one relies on "self-power," the other on "other-power." The one promises some degree of awakening in this life; the other guarantees it after death. The one demands exertion; the other invites complete faith. The one is "hard," the other is "easy." The one is built upon meditation seated on cushions; the other upon prayers and hymn singing seated in pews. But Nāgārjuna is on the roster of Dharma Ancestors in both traditions, Ōbaku combines elements of both, and D.T. Suzuki, one of the most well-known conveyors of Zen to the West, spent a significant amount of time and ink on Pure Land thought. Whatever boundary exists between the two traditions has to be much more permeable than the common portrayal of each would seem to indicate.

The Buddha offered the Dharma as the way that conduces to the "unshakable deliverance of mind" that is its "goal, its heartwood, and its end." In this paper I revisit the purported boundary between Zen and Pure Land thought and practice in light of that aim. I focus particularly on the much-touted self-power v. other-power distinction and the correlative distinction between hard and easy practice, since here is where the much-discussed lines between ordained and lay and between socially-engaged and contemplative practice seem to lie.

We are still within the first hundred years of the planting of the Dharma in the West. If the Dharma is to take root and flourish here, we do well to avail ourselves of the full breadth and depth of its expressions long before engaging in attempts to "Westernize" or "modernize" it. A robust engagement of Zen and Pure Land teaching is a necessary step in advancing that fuller transmission of the Dharma.

Engaged Buddhism / Buddhism and Violence 2

War, Violence and dhamma in Buddhist Thought: On the Triumph of Righteousness

Roshan de Silva-Wijeyeratne (University of Dundee) and James Taylor (Chiang

Mai University)

In the last couple of years the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) has been working on a project that has co-opted leading Buddhist scholars (mainly Pali textualists) into developing an argument that presents Buddhist texts and history as aligned with the prescriptive logic of International Humanitarian Law (IHL). This paper questions that agenda, as well as the value of a project which *prima facie* appears to argue by analogy; the argument presented in defence of this project asserts that in order to make the liberal principles of IHL palatable to Buddhist majority governments in Southeast and South Asia all we have to do is account for the historic Buddha's humanitarian gestures vis-à-vis the war-like conflicts that he was confronted with. We ought to be sceptical that we can analogise between the socio-economic and politico-legal concerns of the Buddha (in a time that was absent the nation-state and prior to the European transformation of much of South and Southeast Asia and to paraphrase Philip Almond, in a time prior to the Anglo-European discovery and transformation of Buddhism) and the essential liberal-legal preoccupation of IHL, the treatment of civilians in a time of war.

Tibetan Exiles' Accounts of Resistance to China: Buddhism, Identity, Truth and Morality

Sam Pehrson (University of St Andrews),

Co-authors: Tenzin Choedak and Passang Tsering (College of Higher Tibetan Studies), Nick Hopkins (University of Dundee),

Over the past 70 years, Tibetans have engaged in various forms of resistance to Chinese authority, including guerrilla warfare, street protest and, most recently, self-immolation. As a social psychologist my interest is in the way Tibetans represent their social relations including how they define and characterise the Tibetan ingroup itself, its relations to other groups, and the implications of this for action. Yet the centrality of religious concerns to the Tibet-China conflict makes engagement with Buddhist Studies essential to understanding these processes. I will present a thematic analysis of older Tibetans' biographical interviews covering the period of occupation and the cultural revolution, and of essays written by younger Tibetans in exile about the recent self-immolation movement. I will explore the extent to which Buddhism serves as a sense-making resource for both generations as they navigate their place in the world and deliberate different forms of resistance, the moral and emotional tensions raised by the self-immolation, and hopes for the future. I also investigate the extent to which younger exiles' essays reflect aspects of Buddhist modernism that distinguish them from elders' accounts. For example, references to magical protection and the special status of monastics and tulkus are present in the latter but largely absent in the former, which instead emphasise themes such as nonviolence and the importance of positive motivation in determining outcomes.

Practice Research: Secular Buddhist Ethics in Art and Design Education

Tim Stephens (University of the Arts London)

This paper argues secular Buddhist ethics are distinct from humanist ethics, agnosticism, or other secular forms of ethics, or positions, such as a moral pluralism, each of which might necessarily compromise the Buddhist-ness of the former. These overlaps appear in the work of prominent secular Buddhists and/or post-Buddhists, those inspired and influenced by Buddhism but not practicing according to the tenets of traditional forms of Buddhism. My argument will elaborate that a secular Buddhist ethics might contingently, yet insightfully, be found in artistic practices, especially when these are understood as akin to meditative practices. This allows a practice-based definition of ethics to emerge. Practice research is still an emerging field (Bulley and Sahin, 2021) and practice ethics moreso (Roberts and Rendell 2022). The argument is then elaborated through my work as co-chair of an Educational Ethics committee and member of the Research Ethics committee in am art and design university. In the context of educational ethics, a new field of work, qualities held by a secular Buddhist might find space and articulation, and indeed structures of support in policy and practice. If this can be extended to a real-world context, from a purely educational or academic one -if there is a valid ethical distinction - then a practice-based ethics might retain qualities that include the pluralist diversity that Buddhism, in its own plurality, seems to demand. The ethical issues raised by systemic bias (on Race and Sex for example, both increasingly contentious terms) and engaged Buddhism, say regards climate action, will highlight dimensions -through a nondualistic perspective- of both identity-based and issue-based politics as ultimately, integrated. I argue that artists successfully operate as embodied ethical practitioners between such contexts, and that this is akin to a secular Buddhist position.

Roundtable: Lives of the Buddha

Alan Wagner (CRCAO, Paris) & Discussants

An open, round-table discussion among scholars from different specialties in Buddhist studies regarding the oral presentation of Buddhist scriptures in the past and present, following the performance of Lives of the Buddha on June 21st.

Buddhist, Buddhicized, and un-Buddhist Narrative

The Seductions of Sacrifice: On Reading the *Jātaka*s for Pleasure

Elizabeth Angowski (Earlham College)

The Dharma of Warrior-Kings and Talking Horses: Treasuring Buddhist Popular Literature

Natasha Mikles (Texas State University)

A Tale of Gods and Men: Re-Imaging Approaches to Tibetan Buddhism Through Cone Yum Tsering's Short Story, '*The Meeting of Mountain Gods*' (lha gnyen gros tshogs)

Erin Burke (University of Virginia)

In light of the historical development of academic disciplines and the steady pressures of the professional job market, we know that several boundaries continue to be reinforced within the field of Buddhist Studies today: Buddhist vs. non-Buddhist; Tibetan vs. Indian; secular vs. religious; ancient vs. modern. Depending on the case, such boundaries may serve the scholar of Buddhist Studies well or poorly. Still, it is clear that a continual revisitation of the explicit and tacit boundaries that guide our studies is both necessary and productive. Through a detailed exploration of four diverse texts, this panel examines Buddhist narrative as a boundary-crossing and boundary-challenging phenomenon. It asks: how can a look at Buddhist-informed narratives help us rethink the boundaries we have inherited? How can it help us bring such boundaries into relief in order to scrutinize them?

This panel seeks to look at these texts in conversation naked, with the boundaries removed. In and of themselves, each of the texts studied by the scholars on this panel can be considered a "boundary-crossing narrative," whether for its trans-regional significance, its trans-historical journey, or its transcendence of our academic categories for what qualifies as "Buddhist" literature. The panelists will, first, highlight some of the boundaries that their texts evoke; next, they will examine their text for how–as a narrative–it calls for a rethinking of received histories of Buddhism and Buddhist Studies. Collectively, our work foregrounds a reader-centric approach, one that acknowledges the scholar as both reader affected by the text and scholar analyzing the text and asks how we can attend to aspects of the texts that seep - or burst - through those boundaries and invite continual reimagining. We hope the panel and subsequent discussion of the papers will expand the scope of the questions we bring to Buddhist texts, as well as the questions those texts ask of us.

UKABS Post-Graduate Panel

Monumental Memorials: Multi-chambered Stupas in Central Tibet During the 13-15th Centuries

Shengnan Dong (SOAS)

From the early 13th to 15th centuries, a type of monumental stupa with multiple painted chapels became popular in the southern part of Central Tibet (gtsang). The first one of this type, built by Tropu Lotsāwa Jampa Pel, was a memorial stupa (1230-1235) dedicated to the former's Indian teacher Śākyaśrībhadra after his death. In the following centuries, similar stupas appeared in nearby regions, including the Great Kumbum of Jonang, the Gyang Bumoche, the Stupa of Chung Riwoche, and most famously, the Gyantse Kumbum. Collectively, they exhibit features unprecedented in earlier stupas, such as the incorporation of multiple chapels (lha khang), and a vase section (bum pa) that opens to practitioners for visual and bodily engagement. The latter, especially, was a space commonly reserved for relics and would be sealed up after consecration.

Previous studies have mainly considered and compared these large stupas in terms of the styles of the murals. Their shared architectural and iconographic aspects, however, merit further discussion. Focusing on these multi-chapelled stupas, this paper explores the various religious and artistic traditions that shaped this unique architectural form. I argue that the distinctive treatment of the space and the images were very likely inspired by narrations and pilgrimage report related to a legendary stupa called Dhānyakaṭaka, which became known in Tibet since the late 11th century. Further, I argue that the images exhibited in these stupas were transformed by the structure into sacred objects that traverse boundaries of traditional categories. As a result, they are to be understood as both receptacles of the Buddha body (sku rten) as well as a type of relics (ring bsrel). Examination of these aspects will illuminate the complexities in the symbolic meaning of this type of stupa as well as the duality inherent in its architectural structure and its content.

Bringing the Dharma over Mountains: Buddhist Transmission Activity and the Hindukush-Karakoram Mountain Range

Edward A S Ross (University of Reading)

When the Buddha entered parinirvana, he instructed his followers to take the Dharma as the teacher and spread it to people in their own language. Over the next few centuries, Buddhist practitioners spread the Dharma across the Indian subcontinent. At the time of King Aśoka Maurya, Buddhist proselytism gained a new fervour, and missionaries were sent to all of the regions surrounding the Mauryan Empire. For the missionaries travelling to Central Asia, they were met with a particular roadblock, the Hindukush-Karakoram Mountain Range. This mountainous region was both a wall and gateway between Central Asia and India.

Although there are few literary sources that discuss the 3rd century BCE missions to Central Asia in detail, the recent discovery of a stupa from the Swat Valley, Pakistan, potentially dating back to the Aśokan era, provides some insight into the possible reach of the missions; at bare minimum the eastern edges of the Hindukush. Since mountain travel was extremely dangerous in the ancient world, it is unclear if the Buddhist missionaries would have been able to cross the Hindukush and meet with the people in Central Asia. Nonetheless, Chinese travel records and hagiographies from the 6th-7th centuries CE discuss travel from the opposite direction, through the Tarim Basin, over the Pamirs, through Central Asia, and over the Hindukush.

Looking at these detailed travel reports can provide important insight how dangerous travel over the Hindukush-Karakoram mountain range may have been during the 3rd century BCE. This paper will focus on Chinese travel writing from the 6th-7th centuries that discuss the Pamir and Hindukush-Karakoram mountain ranges to determine their perceived danger. These accounts will be compared to modern geographical and epigraphical evidence to discuss the lived experience of travelling Buddhist missionaries in Central Asia in the 3rd century BCE.

Regression and the 'Diamond Like-samādhi'

Peter Cherry (SOAS)

This talk will focus on the concept of regression from *arhat* status and the role of the 'Diamond-Like *samādhi*' (*vajropama-samādhi*) in the process. Passages from the 2nd century *Abhidharma-Mahāvibhāṣa* (AMV) illuminate debates which probe the vulnerability of the *arhat* to 'falling back'. These debates challenge the finality of noble attainment and also the efficacy of the *vajropama-samādhi*. This meditative state features in many Sarvāstivādin sources as the destroyer of all defilements, attained at the moment of elevation to *arhat*. In cases of regression, the *vajropama-samādhi* seems to lose its soteriological relevance as defilements re-appear in the karmic stream. In the first part of the talk, I will review sections of the AMV to determine whether the *vajropama-samādhi* provided any protection against regression. I will then move on to consider the question of regression in the *Abhidharmakośa* and *Abhidharma-hṛdaya* corpus before finally assessing the figure of the 'Non-Regressing Bodhisattva' *(avaivārtika bodhisattva)* in a range of sources. In all cases, my primary concern is to assess whether the *vajropama-samādhi* acts as a bulwark against regression. This question raises important issues around the ultimacy of abandoning defilement. If all abandonment on the path of spiritual practice is reversible, then any noble attainment is provisional. This bears weighty implications for the authority of Buddhist *ārya*-s in general and for the *arhat* specifically. If, however, abandonment of defilement is final, then what part does the *vajropama-samādhi* play in ensuring this? These questions will form the basis of my presentation and help to steer participant questions towards wider soteriological concerns within the field.

The Hedonic Training of Early Buddhism

Bernat Font (University of Bristol)

My dissertation explores the concept of 'feeling' (*vedanā*) in the early Buddhist texts, and it looks at how pleasant, unpleasant and neutral feelings actively contribute to awakening. In this paper I will focus on the soteriological value of spiritual pleasure in early Buddhism. To do this, I lean on the work of Ariel Glucklich, who suggests religions offer 'patterns of hedonic training', that is, cultivating one's relationship to pleasure or enjoyment. To clarify religions' complex relationship to pleasure, he borrows evolutionary theory's classification

of pleasure into novelty, mastery, and play. So, what kind of hedonic training does early Buddhism propose? Does this threefold classification reveal anything? What does progress look like from the angle of *vedanā*?

I follow P. D. Premasiri in seeing early Buddhism as a form of quantitative hedonism, and I argue it considers spiritual pleasure to be soteriologically valuable and effective. In its gradual approach to liberation, it *uses* rather than *opposes* our tendency to seek what feels good. I will analyse how the Pali *suttas* justify spiritual pleasure, how this fits into a wider pattern of hedonic training, and I will reflect on the perhaps damned question of early Buddhist studies: What is the first *jhāna*? Paying attention to how its joy and pleasure (*pītisukha*) are born of withdrawal from the hindrances, not yet of collectedness (*samādhi*), I will suggest the first *jhāna* sits on the fence between mastery and play pleasure, whereas higher *jhānas* have become fully play pleasure. In exploring how this relates to other Indian religious movements, I will respond to recent scholarly work that undermines the liberating potential of spiritual pleasure.

Body, Mind, and Health

Ayurvedic Mindfulness: Buddhist Health and Healing in Vietnam

Sara Swenson (Dartmouth College)

Amid spiking rates of Covid-19 and cancer, health has captured public concern in Vietnam. Lay and monastic Buddhists in the Mahayana-majority country are responding by reviving and innovating religious theories of the body to address widespread anxieties over health. These theories draw from Vedic, Daoist, Buddhist, and indigenous resources to configure health as an effect of karma. A proliferation of new media encourages raw vegan and ayurvedic diets as spiritual solutions to health problems caused by moral issues of greed, ignorance, and anger. Adopting these strict dietary regimens promotes practices of mindfulness and attention to Buddhist principles of dependent origination or "interbeing" [*duyên khởi*], ideally working to improve karma and recover health.

In this paper, I analyze recent findings from ethnographic research to show how the blending of health systems and spiritual ethics is a longstanding historical practice in Vietnam. Rather than parse Ayurvedic and Daoist nutrition systems as "non-Buddhist" ideas used by Buddhists, I advocate for a more expansive approach to Buddhist studies that encourages scholars to ask why and how local Buddhists adopt these diverse spiritual practices in their own understandings of Buddhist cosmology. I conclude the paper by using Rongdao Lai and Jessica Main's definition of "Engaged Buddhism" (2013) to propose that analyzing Buddhist health in Vietnam further challenges concepts of secularism. When the human body, itself, is perceived as an inherently spiritual and moral product, then public healthcare systems, agricultural development, and economic exchange also become inseparable, unbounded sites of religious practice.

Buddhist Āyurvedic Therapy (BĀT) in UK Nursing Research

Matthew Aldridge (King's College London)

Buddhist Āyurvedic Therapy (BĀT) is a new subject in the field of Buddhist Studies, cutting across an expanding variety of boundaries. With World Health Organisation (WHO) support, the subject was first introduced by Emeritus Professor Sumanapala Galmangoda in Sri Lanka as 'Buddhist Āyurvedic Counselling and Psychiatry'. This began with initial development of the subject in 2003, introduction of a Post-graduate Diploma and Master of Arts in Buddhist Āyurvedic Counselling in 2007, and an initial pilot of around 25 counselling programs throughout Sri Lanka. From the outset this subject has transcended boundaries, starting with that between the Āyurvedic Institute, and the Post Graduate Institute of Pāli and Buddhist studies (PGIPBS) at the University of Kelaniya. Now in a global context, this new subject is cutting across further boundaries.

The presenter, a UK registered mental health nurse, is the first practitioner outside Asia to have qualified in this subject. Under interdisciplinary supervision of Prof. Simpson (Florence Nightingale Faculty of Nursing, Midwifery & Palliative Care) and Dr O'Brien-Kop (Department of Theology & Religious Studies) at King's College London (KCL), as well as external supervision from Prof. Galmangoda (Dean of the Faculty of Buddhist Āyurvedic Counseling and Psychiatry of the Nāgānanda International University (Institute) for Buddhist Studies) in Sri Lanka, an applied BĀT intervention development study is currently underway at KCL.

Taking an 'ecology of knowledges' approach (Santos, 2007), this project is facilitating disruption of interdisciplinary, international and intercultural boundaries; being the first to introduce BĀT within a Higher Education Institution (HEI) in the Global North, and within the field of Nursing Research. This presentation will discuss challenges, considerations and lessons learned in relation to negotiating these boundaries in the project: 'Buddhist Āyurvedic Therapy (BĀT) for Global Mental Health: A Health Humanities Intervention Development Study'.

Buddhist Śūnyatā, the Biopharma Development of Psychedelics, and Homo Economicus: Ego Dissolution in an Age of Re-Ordering

James E. Willis, III (University of Indianapolis)

Pharmaceutical treatments using psychedelics (like psilocybin, DMT, MDMA, and ketamine) are underway with promising evidence that they can provide clinical assistance in the treatment of serious mental illnesses such as post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), severe depression, and generalized anxiety. These developments are promising, yet biopharma firms are undertaking this research and development in an age of rapidly changing economic conditions, sometimes called late capitalism. One consequence of late capitalism, particularly when thinking about technological change, is the alteration of everyday human activities like work. The clinical use of psychedelics may figure heavily in the next few decades to alleviate a number of human ailments related to changes already underway.

Unaided, however, by deep principles of wisdom, such clinical uses could become unmoored and used as a yet another economic tool of ordering and exploiting human activity. Here, Buddhism has much to contribute as a pragmatic critique. Specifically, the Mahāyāna teaching of *śūnyatā*, or the emptiness of intrinsic existence, can serve as a guide to the temporary ego dissolution sought in psychedelic treatments. In a 21st century adaptation of dependent origination, particularly as its understood in the Mahāsāṃghika school, can critique and help psychedelically-aided treatments to understand the essential nature of ego dissolution.

I propose that this new frontier of clinical treatments might well be substantively aided by the ancient insights presented in *śūnyatā*, with particular sensitivity to abrupt economic changes. I further propose that there are specific insights which biopharma companies, clinicians, and patients might draw from Buddhist *śūnyatā* to advance the use of psychedelic therapies in temporary ego dissolution.

Buddhism and Politics: Historical Questions and Emerging Approaches.

In recent years, boundary-crossing between Buddhist Studies and the study of politics has intensified. Scholars and activists are considering anew the relevance of Buddhist insights to various political questions, including issues of gender and sexual identity, racial equality, cultural rights, economic and ecological justice, nationalism and globalization, to name only a few. At the same time, these discussions have encouraged a more reflexive and critical approach to Buddhist Studies itself, to historical debates about Buddhism and politics, and to the social and political challenges facing Buddhist practitioner communities and Buddhist societies more broadly. This panel brings together scholars in History, Buddhist Studies and Social and Political Philosophy to consider a few developments in Buddhist approaches to politics. Together, the papers consider the history of Buddhism's

interaction with politics, as well as the relevance of Buddhist philosophical ideas and ethical principles to current social and political concerns.

Our first paper considers some traditional ideas of politics in early Buddhism, and, in particular, some of the revaluations of politics in engaged Buddhism and the idea of engaged Buddhism itself. Exploring the complex historical relationship between religion and politics at both a national and grassroots level, our second paper reflects on the Chinese government's use of Buddhism as an instrument of nation- and diplomatic-relationship-building during the Mao era. Our final paper considers the Two Truths, a central doctrine of Madhyamaka Buddhist thought, as a tool for navigating current tensions in political debates around identity. While these papers touch on only a few of the issues animating discussions around Buddhism and politics, we hope they will offer a starting point for fruitful conversation.

Left, Right and the Middle-way: Engaged Buddhism and Politics

Paul Fuller (University of Edinburgh)

Buddhism has often been understood as apolitical. Indeed, Buddhist monastic disenfranchisement is a feature of some South and Southeast Buddhist countries (Larsson 2015). This paper considers some of the revaluations of politics in engaged Buddhism and the idea of engaged Buddhism itself. I think that engaged Buddhism is often be based on a dismantling of ontological and metaphysical ideas. In turn, this can lead to a privileging of politics.

One of the central features of engaged Buddhism is its aim of bringing Buddhism into life. It does this by repairing the dichotomy between the mundane world (*lokiya*) and the supramundane world (*lokuttara*). Engaged Buddhism is not about escaping from the rounds of existence but achieving liberation in this life.

This leads to the possibility that Buddhists can be politically active in the world and that the apolitical image of Buddhism might be an historical inaccuracy. One of the factors in this is that historians of Buddhism might have been blindsided by the position of Buddhism under colonialism, when the political activities of Buddhists were curtailed. This paper will offer a theoretical underpinning which unites Buddhism and politics.

Negotiating the Boundaries between Religion and Politics: Pilgrimage and Diplomatic Activities of Buddhists on Mount Jiuhua in the Mao Era (1949–1978)

Nan Ouyang, (Ghent University)

The Mao era is generally considered a dark and isolated period for Chinese Buddhists, who had limited or no communication with their peers from abroad. Nevertheless, select Buddhist mountains managed to receive pilgrims from abroad; diplomatic delegations composed of handpicked elite Buddhists went abroad to build friendly relationships with other Buddhist countries. All the communication was orchestrated or supervised by the Chinese government, which used Buddhism as an invaluable religious and cultural legacy in nation- and diplomatic-relationship-building. This paper examines how the government-led foreign-oriented communication activities impacted the fate of the Buddhist communities on a pilgrimage mountain, Mount Jiuhua, and involved them in politics from both grassroots and national levels. On the one hand, to meet the needs of diasporic Chinese Buddhist believers, the authorities approved and supervised their pilgrimages to Mount Jiuhua, such as a group from Malaysia (1957) and another one from Hong Kong (1964). These pilgrims donated funding to support the Buddhists and requested the practice of religious services, which challenged the harsh religious policies at home. On the other hand, an elite master from Mount Jiuhua, Yifang, was appointed as a member of the "diplomatic delegation of Buddhism" on the national level, which aimed to forge relationships with other Buddhist countries during the 1950s. For instance, Yifang alongside other prestigious Buddhist leaders visited Myanmar in 1955, which had an enormous impact on his peers on Mount Jiuhua and made them follow closely the news of their foreign peers. Hence, in a twisted way, Chinese Buddhism was put on the international stage and played an integrated part in global Buddhist history. Through analyzing the activities at grassroots and

diplomatic levels, this study reveals the rarely told "openness" of Chinese Buddhism and the complex relationship between religion and politics.

Two Truths and One Doubt: Madhyamaka, Politics, and Identity

Saul Tobias (California State University, Fullerton)

This paper explores the "Two Truths" – a central doctrine of Buddhist Madhyamaka thought - as a framework for thinking through some of the philosophical and political challenges raised by the concept of identity, as that concept informs discussion of civil and political rights in Britain, the United States, and elsewhere.

Today, the concept of identity colours much current discussion around social inequality, political inclusion, and civil rights. In this context, the social, psychological, and legal realities of identity across categories such as race, gender, and culture are inescapable. At the same time, a broad body of scholarship contends that such identities are socially and historically-constructed categories, existing by convention. Though the tension between the lived reality of identity and its ultimately "empty" nature has sometimes been recognized by both scholars and activists, navigating this tension remains difficult and often contentious.

The Two Truths Doctrine, as elaborated by the great Madhyamaka thinkers Nagarjuna, Candrakirti, and Tsongkhapa, asserts both the "emptiness" (*śūnyatā*) and "dependent-arising" (*pratītyasamutpāda*) of phenomena. In asserting the inseparability of these two truths, Madhyamaka thought seeks to navigate a "middle way" between essentialist and nihilist views regarding the existence of phenomena. In applying Madhyamaka thought to questions of identity and contemporary politics, my paper considers:

• the relevance of Madhyamaka arguments regarding both the emptiness and dependent-arising of phenomena (as a function of causes and conditions, positionality, and designation) for understandings of identity as lived reality.

• Madhyamaka thought as a model of ethical and epistemic humility. Here, Madhyamaka philosophical "skepticism" is upheld as a model of "productive doubt", that is, as an open and compassionate approach to engaging across contentious boundaries of knowledge, politics, and values.

In recent years, boundary-crossing between Buddhist Studies and the study of politics has intensified. Scholars and activists are considering anew the relevance of Buddhist insights to various political questions, including issues of gender and sexual identity, racial equality, cultural rights, economic and ecological justice, nationalism and globalization, to name only a few. At the same time, these discussions have encouraged a more reflexive and critical approach to Buddhist Studies itself, to historical debates about Buddhism and politics, and to the social and political challenges facing Buddhist practitioner communities and Buddhist societies more broadly. This panel brings together scholars in History, Buddhist Studies and Social and Political Philosophy to consider a few developments in Buddhist approaches to politics. Together, the papers consider the history of Buddhism's interaction with politics, as well as the relevance of Buddhist philosophical ideas and ethical principles to current social and political concerns.

Our first paper considers some traditional ideas of politics in early Buddhism, and, in particular, some of the revaluations of politics in engaged Buddhism and the idea of engaged Buddhism itself. Exploring the complex historical relationship between religion and politics at both a national and grassroots level, our second paper reflects on the Chinese government's use of Buddhism as an instrument of nation- and diplomatic-relationship-building during the Mao era. Our final paper considers the Two Truths, a central doctrine of Madhyamaka Buddhist thought, as a tool for navigating current tensions in political debates around identity. While these papers touch on only a few of the issues animating discussions around Buddhism and politics, we hope they will offer a starting point for fruitful conversation.

KEYNOTE

Boundaries Within: Local and Transcultural Efforts to Re-establish the Theravāda Bhikkhunīsaṃgha

Ute Hüsken (Heidelberg University)

The opportunity – or lack of opportunity – for contemporary women to be ordained as bhikkhunīs in the Theravāda tradition has been discussed for a few decades now. Today, a number of local Buddhist communities and transregional traditions have revived "full ordination" (*upasampadā*) and enable women to live as bhikkhunīs in formally established and recognized monastic communities (*saṃgha)*: since 1988, and with increasing frequency in the 21st century, ordinations of women into Theravāda Buddhism take place in India, Sri Lanka, Australia, Germany, Bangladesh, Indonesia, and in the U.S.A. These local Buddhist communities have developed their own stances and practices regarding women's roles as 'religious professionals', reflecting the Buddhist community's specific local historical development and contemporary needs. Today, with a growing global Theravāda bhikkhunīsaṃgha, more and more Mahāyāna bhikṣuṇīs request to be re-ordained as Theravāda bhikkhunīs and to live in these new women's communities. At the same time, some bhikkhuni communities in Asia feel the need to draw clear boundaries between themselves and their 'Western' sisters. The presentation will discuss such ambivalences and inner contradictions of the process of the Theravāda bhikkhunīs' gradual local and global establishment and acceptance.

PANELS AND PRESENTERS

Texts, Language, and Literature 1

A Buddhist View of Conceptualization and Ideology

Beier Wang (Leipzig University)

Concepts, on different levels, plays an important role in constructing boundaries. On an individual level, one interprets the world through the process of conceptualization and categorization. On a social level, people create beliefs, standpoints, and ideologies based on different concepts, which, if without mutual understanding, leads to conflicts and suffering. From the Buddhist point of view, language construes a mundane world of extortion and illusion, and a transcendental realization should be beyond language. On the other hand, the Buddha adopts language to teach and preach the Dharma, indicating the soteriological function that language may have.

This paper provides a systematic review of the Buddhist understanding of language and conceptualization by outlining the connotational development of the terms *prapañca* (conceptual proliferation), *vitarka-vicāra* (initial inquiry and investigation) and *vikalpa* (conceptualization) from Early Buddhism, Abhidharma to Yogācāra. Examining their context of occurrence, the paper analyses how the usage and significance of the terms varies along time. The study not only provides a philological overview of the key terms regarding conceptualization, but indicates how the Buddhist interpretation of language is expounded in different time frames.

Furthermore, the paper attempts to apply the Buddhist philosophy of language in the comprehension of the real-life situation. For a mundane mind, personal well-being is largely impacted by what happens in the world and the ideology that shapes his/her way of interpreting the experience. In the renowned book of the French Psychologist Gustave Le Bon, *The Crowd: A Study of the Popular Mind*, the irrationality of the groupment in respect of social ideology, political or religious, is extensively described. I intend to discover how Buddhist doctrines would explain the conceptuality of the group and probe the potential suggestions that Buddhism may provide.

Anupādā parinibbāna and the Paths of Practice Leading to its Attainment

Sajal Barua (The University of Hong Kong)

Nibbāna, which signifies the end of *saṃsāric* journey, represents the ultimate goal of Buddhist spiritual practices in early Buddhist literature. The Pāli canon provides primarily two interpretations of *nibbāna*: 1) a state of experience completely free of unwholesome psychological qualities (Itivuttaka, p. 38), and 2) an abstract state characterized as unborn (*ajāta*), unbecome (*abhāta*), unmade (*akata*), and unconditioned (*asaṅkhata*) (Udāna, p. 80). Further, in terms of *upādi* (substrata) being present or absent it is categorized into two types: *saupādisesanibbāna* (*nibbāna* with substrata remaining) and *anupādisesanibbāna* (*nibbāna* without substrata remaining). 'Anupādā parinibbāna' is another phraseology used in the canonical texts to describe the characteristics of *nibbāna* with an emphasis that the final *nibbāna* is without clinging. The expression seems to have been used to distinguish it from a possible mistaken view that there could be an experience of *nibbāna* with clinging (*saupādāna*), (Majjhima nikāya, vol. I, p. 148).

Buddhaghosa, a fifth-century commentator and interpreter of the Pāli canonical literature, in a commentarial text provides a unique interpretation of the canonical phrase *anupāda parinibbāna*. This paper looks at Buddhaghosa's interpretation of *anupāda parinibbāna* in relation to the two types of *nibbāna* mentioned above and provides an understanding of how commentators made sense of the canonical understanding of the concept of *nibbāna*. It will also provide a discussion of specific Buddhist practices leading to *anupāda parinibbāna*.

Epigraphic Pali: a Revision of Boundaries between Pali, Epigraphic Prakrit, Māgadhī and the Ur-Canon of Buddhism

Stefan Karpik (Independent)

Pali and Epigraphic Prakrit are considered separate languages although the sound changes evident in the latter are normal sound changes recorded in other Indo-Aryan varieties and could be attributed as coming from the former. This boundary is equivalent to describing the language of Shakespeare as a separate language from English; it is a boundary that should not exist.

It is in part created by not understanding a boundary that existed in ancient Pali scholarship and does not now, that between the language of the canon and Māgadhī. The Pali Tipiṭaka, its commentaries and the grammars of Kaccāyana, Moggallāna and the Saddanīti nowhere use the term 'Māgadhī'. This is shown by computer searches, which were not possible when Western scholars first incorrectly equated *magadhabhāsa, māgadhiko vohāro, magadhānaṃ nirutti* and the like with *Māgadhī,* It is inconceivable that these ancient scholars did not know the term *Māgadhī* and the fact that they did not use it suggests that they were scrupulously avoiding it and erecting a boundary that was wider than *Māgadhī*. I suggest they were referring back to the first Magadhan empire, i.e. the

Mauryan, and also to the second Magadhan empire, the Gupta, when 'Magadha' was effectively equivalent to the Indian subcontinent and encompassed most, if not all, Indo-Aryan speakers.

If asked what language he was speaking, the Buddha would have replied, according to the Tipiṭaka, that he was speaking the *samañña*, standard speech, of *Ariyaka*, the Aryan language. Epigraphic Prakrit was the standard inscriptional language of India for centuries before Sanskrit superseded it. It is a reflex of Pali and should be renamed Epigraphic Pali. This implies that Pali was the standard language of the Buddha's time and that a third boundary, between Pali as the language of Theravada Buddhism and the language of the Ur-canon, should not exist.

Modern and Western Encounters

Narrating the Transmission of Buddhism to Britain: Negotiating Boundaries between the Esoteric and Rationalism

Elizabeth J. Harris (University of Birmingham)

In 1908, British Buddhist monk, Ananda Metteyya (Allan Bennett, 1873-1923), came to London with a group of Burmese donors on one of the first Buddhist missions to Britain. Previous to his higher ordination in Arakan in colonial Burma (1902), he had been a theosophist, a ceremonial magician within the Order of the Golden Dawn and a friend of Aleister Crowley. His spiritual seekership, leading eventually to conversion to Buddhism, was not atypical in late nineteenth and early twentieth century Britain. Although Ananda Metteyya as a Buddhist monk distanced himself from the esoteric and critiqued Theosophy, he continued to interact with Theosophists and those interested in the esoteric. He was also implicated in a court case that involved Aleister Crowley.

The intertwining narratives of esotericism and Buddhism in Britain led to an ideological struggle within the early Buddhist community between those who saw compatibility between Buddhism, the esoteric and the theosophical, and those who sought to present Buddhism as a rational and modern philosophy. Taking Ananda Metteyya as a starting point, this paper will examine the strategies employed within the Buddhist Society of Great Britain and Ireland, founded in 1907 to greet Ananda Metteyya's mission, to negotiate boundaries between the esoteric and Buddhism, and the fractures that had emerged in British Buddhism by the time this Society imploded in the early 1920s.

The paper will argue that key to this landscape of division was the negotiating of boundaries between Buddhism and other expressions of counter-cultural spirituality such as Theosophy. It will draw on data collected for a new biography of Ananda Metteyya authored by me and John L.Crow (Florida State University) to be published by Equinox at the end of 2023 or the beginning of 2024.

Alexandre Kojève and Buddhism

Isabel Jacobs (Queen Mary University of London)

Russian-French philosopher Alexandre Kojève (1902-1968) is most famous for his lectures on Hegel in Paris of the 1930s, influencing intellectuals from Jacques Lacan to Georges Bataille. Kojève's original Hegelianism is often seen as the origin of French postmodernism. However, that Kojève began his philosophical career as a student of Buddhism is still almost unknown. In my paper, I argue that Kojève's interpretation of Hegel was in fact rooted in a unique acquaintance with Buddhist ideas, including notions of annihilation, self, dharma, ritual and freedom. At Heidelberg University, the young Kojève worked with the Indologist Max Walleser, immersing himself in Buddhist texts which he read in Sanskrit, Tibetan and Classical Chinese. Kojève's early work reflect a distinct interest in Buddhism: his first longer philosophical essay is an imagined encounter between Descartes

and Buddha; and the book project *Atheism* (1931) centres around Buddhism and paganism, a topic that still occupied the late Kojève when writing his history of pagan philosophy in the 1950s. During these years, Kojève also extensively traveled through India and South Asia. Kojève's archives at the National Library in Paris are a treasure trove of unpublished texts and notes, many of them concerned with Buddhism and Classical Indian Philosophy, such as a 1929 treatise, written in Russian, about the Buddhist teaching of *karma*. While Kojève's main occupation became Hegel's philosophy, he never abandoned his interest in Buddhism. In my paper, I will give a brief overview of Buddhist motifs in Kojève, arguing that an encounter with Buddhist Studies may transform and enrich our perception of French thought in the twentieth century. Simultaneously, Kojève's unique reception of Buddhist ideas, that had a significant influence on contemporary thought, might also be of interest for scholars within the field of Buddhist Studies.

From Borders to Bordering: Buddhism in the Eastern Himalayas

Georgios T. Halkias (The University of Hong Kong)

Himalayan Buddhism has long been a bastion of cultural and spiritual significance for the people of the region fostering a unique sense of identity and shared values. In recent years, religious dynamics have become intertwined with escalating border anxieties between China and India. In the context of rising nationalism and territorial disputes, religious institutions, cross-border networks of trade and knowledge exchange, pilgrimage routes, and traditional religious practices have been disrupted giving rise to new regional and transregional configurations of statecraft and soft power. Using a combination of historical analysis, case studies, and field research in the Himalayas, this study aims to situate the re-invention of Buddhism in the rise of local identities, monastic politics, and international discourses. This approach also entails an examination of the historical, cultural, and institutional spaces occupied by Buddhism in the wake of nation-states and its deployment as soft power by Tibetan, Indian and Chinese groups. Drawing insights from a system's thinking approach to complex and diverging historical interactions and experiences, it will be shown that competing projections of borders in the Eastern Himalayas have problematized the separation between religious and non-religious fields of practice challenging traditional patterns of economic growth, political stability, and religious coherence in the region. By studying the intricate interrelations between these discourses and their causal feedback effects on each other, we can discern different layers of complexity and theorize on a more nuanced understanding of the role of borders simultaneously uniting and dividing Buddhist identities competing for visibility and resources.

Constructing a Flexible Tibetan Buddhism

Maria Sharapan (University of Jyväskylä)

This study is based on a larger dissertation research into the topic of Tibetan Buddhism in the West (Sharapan, 2021). My PhD dissertation dealt with how traditional Tibetan Buddhism is negotiated in the dialogue with Western converts. It was based on seven years of forum discussions, as well as interviews with convert Tibetan Buddhists in Helsinki, and their Tibetan teachers. Here I would like to look closely at my third data-set and focus on how traditionally-trained Tibetan Buddhist lamas, who reside and teach in the West, position themselves with respect to institutional Tibetan Buddhism. The data is seven interviews with monks from five different schools of Tibetan Buddhism. They were collected during 2017-2019, all but one, in Finland. In this study, I approach the interviews through the lens of Discursive Psychology, or DP, (Edwards & Potter, 1922) to see how the monks construct their identities as part of and in relation to their lineages and traditions (Nikander, 2012; Wooffitt & Widdicombe, 2006).

The interviews were not collected as anonymous, so each participant was aware that their words might have academic and personal consequences. Their conversations with the researcher (myself), who is both an ingroup (as a convert Tibetan Buddhist) and an outgroup (as a researcher), provide an insight into how an appealing but continual image of the religious institution is constructed and their specific role is balanced with respect to it. The vibrant gap between traditional authenticity and the pressure of modernity has been pinpointed in research

on Tibetan Buddhism before (McKenzie, 2011; Konik, 2009). However, here I would like to adopt a micro level social constructionist lens to see how the process unfolds in talk.

Across Lineages, Schools, and Religions

The Twentieth Century Sectarianisation of Buddhism in Vietnam

Alexander Soucy (Saint Mary's University)

The Vietnamese scholar, Trân Văn Giáp, wrote the first history of Vietnamese Buddhism in the 1920s, describing it through the paradigm of Zen (Thiên) schools. Cuong Tu Nguyen has since shown that this history is based on an uncritical reading of a text from the 14th century that Trân Văn Giáp used as the basis for his historical description. This description, in turn, was taken up as the basis for Vietnamese Buddhists' understanding of their religious history. This is despite the observable fact that Vietnamese Buddhism, by and large, persists in primarily being a devotional Buddhism that draws most heavily from Pure Land Buddhist traditions. Through the 20th century, and particularly in south Vietnam after 1954, Buddhist reformers persisted in outlining Buddhism in Vietnam as having distinct sects, with Zen being the core of Vietnamese Buddhism. In the 1960s several young Buddhist monks, like Thích Thanh Từ and Thich Nhất Hạnh began to actualize a distinct Vietnamese Zen. In reaction to this sectarian assertion, there has been a counter-reaction that has sought to delineate a distinct doctrinal Pure Land tradition and to establish a Pure Land orthodoxy that distinguishes it from the regular devotional practices. This paper will use Vietnamese Buddhist journals from the 1930s through to the 2000s in order to show how this process of sectarian delineation continues to be played out.

The Negotiation of Nyingma-Geluk Sectarian Boundaries in the Rebgong Valley, 17th to 19th Centuries

Rachel Pang (Davidson College)

In Tibetan Buddhism, the Geluk sects and Nyingma sects are often portrayed as polar opposites. On the one hand, the Geluk sect is known for its celibate monks and rigorous monastic college system. On the other hand, the Nyingma sect is famed for its non-celibate tantric practitioners and tradition of meditative retreat. This Geluk-Nyingma dichotomy is perhaps most memorably captured in the terms "clerical" and "shamanic" Buddhism first coined by Geoffrey Samuel.

And yet, historically, members of the Geluk and Nyingma sects did not exist in parallel vacuums, but rather, interacted with one another. One such important locus for Geluk-Nyingma interaction was in the Amdo region of eastern Tibet. Recent scholarship by Yangdon Dhondup, Rinchen Dorje, Douglas Duckworth, Paul Nietupski, Adam Pearcey, Rachel Pang, Brenton Sullivan, Victoria Sujata, and others, has revealed a rich tradition of Nyingma-Geluk interaction. Sometimes that relationship was characterized by rivalry, but more often, it was a relationship of inter-sectarian harmony and cross-pollination.

This paper will examine the way in which three different figures negotiated Nyingma-Geluk boundaries in the Rebgong valley of the Amdo region from the seventeenth through nineteenth centuries: Kalden Gyatso (1607-1677), Changlung Pelchen Namkha Jikmé (1757-1821), and Shabkar Tsokdruk Rangdrol (1781-1851). Through the examination of this case study, this paper seeks to illuminate how Tibetan Buddhists in a particular historical and geographical milieu negotiated sectarian difference. The larger question at stake is how Buddhist communities have negotiated the boundaries of sectarian difference historically.

Gods without Worshippers: Religious Boundary-Making in Mathura

Harsha Gautam (The University of Texas at Austin)

Celebrated today as the birth place of Kṛṣṇa, Mathura enjoyed a vibrant religious plurality and a rich composite culture during the first few hundred years of the common era. The abundance of material evidence belonging to different religious traditions of ancient India, makes Mathura an interesting site for the study of religious boundary-making. Apart from the 'major religions', the evidence from Mathura reveal a great deal about the Yakśas and the Nāgas, which are deemed as minor deities but have often negotiated between religious boundaries to form part of multiple religious traditions, at the cost of their independent stature as 'religions'. These deities narrate the story of how construction of visible but unstable boundaries between competing religions transpire, leaving enough space for navigation, negotiation and sometimes appropriation.

Through the analysis of inscriptions and material evidence from Mathura, with some assistance from the avadānas, I will argue that the 'Nāga cult' of Mathura was initially an independent religious tradition and juxtapose its inclusion into the major religions of the time, namely Buddhism, Jainism and Brahmanism, with the appropriation of the Buddha into the Brahmanical religion as the avatāra of Viṣṇu. I will discuss in detail two recently discovered sculptures from Mathura, one that of a Nāga deity from the Kuśāna period and the other depicting the Mahāparinibbāna of the Buddha, which today house in two separate Hindus temples and are worshipped with entirely new identities. Finally, emphasizing on the plurality and instability of boundaries through the example of the Nāgas, I will also highlight the role of religious actors in the process of religious boundary-making and in defining the concept of 'religion'.

Crossing Holocaust Boundaries: Zen Peacemakers in Auschwitz-Birkenau

Sarah K. Pinnock (Trinity University, San Antonio, Texas)

Roshi Bernie Glassman founded the annual Zen Peacemakers gathering at Auschwitz-Birkenau in 1996, which I have attended four times. As a scholar of post-Holocaust Jewish and Christian thought, and a Zen practitioner, I am fascinated by appropriation of a death camp as sacred space and a Buddhist-led interfaith gathering at what may be viewed as a Jewish mass grave. This paper analyzes the rituals conducted at the barracks, gas chambers, crematoria, and the train unloading ramp, in terms of spatial and theological boundaries crossed. Auschwitz functions as a site of pilgrimage, according to Victor Turner's anthropology of ritual, where participants pass under the gate *Arbeit Macht Frei* moving from a crisis of separation, transition, and reintegration. The interfaith liturgy, with Jewish, Christian, and Buddhist readings, raises controversial questions about the purpose of meeting at Auschwitz, guided by Bernie Glassman's tenets of "not knowing" and "bearing witness." It arguably instrumentalizes Holocaust space in order to plunge attendees into the magnitude of suffering. While established Jewish and Christian post-Holocaust theologians reject redemptive responses to victims' suffering, this Buddhist led gathering addresses healing for all victims and perpetrators. The Kaddish prayer traditionally recited in memory of the dead is spoken in all languages of the participants at the crematorium ruins. The Stations of the Cross, adapted to include Holocaust stations, is led by the Roman Catholic priest from Osweicim's Center for Dialogue and Prayer. The Gate of Sweet Nectar serves as the primary Buddhist ritual, alongside zazen, which calls out to hungry ghosts in all space and time. My conclusion identifies concerns with how the Zen Peacemakers transgress boundaries between sacred and secular, history and the present, and religious traditions.

Teaching and Researching from an Interdisciplinary Perspective: The MA in Buddhist Art History and Conservation at The Courtauld

Sujatha Meegama(The Courtauld Institute of Art)

Lori Wong (The Courtauld Institute of Art)

Irina Zhambaldorzhieva (The Courtauld Institute of Art)

Pearl Jackson-Payen (The Courtauld Institute of Art)

Aiken Unni (The Courtauld Institute of Art)

Liutong Yi (The Courtauld Institute of Art)

In September 2022, The Courtauld Institute of Art in London relaunched its MA program in Buddhist Art History and Conservation with an equal emphasis on both disciplines. This one-of-a-kind program brought together two specialists in each of these disciplines to conceive of new ways to break down the boundaries between art history and conservation. In this program, each discipline challenges the other to expand their boundaries in teaching and research, while highlighting shared methods and concerns in both disciplines. How can this cross-disciplinary program aid our understanding of Buddhist heritage–both tangible and intangible–as we also attempt to decolonize both disciplines?

This panel shares the research and experiences of both faculty and students from different parts of the Buddhist world. It examines the curriculum and reflects on the various ways the two disciplines were engaged with through lectures, seminars, assignments, field trips, dialogues with practitioners, and a study trip to Asia. One paper on the digitization of Buddhist manuscripts questions existing practices of digitisation for preservation, bringing attention to the ethics of who benefits, and asking what might be inadvertently lost. Examining domestic but public sacred spaces in the UK, another paper questions the binaries between personal histories and community histories, mass-produced objects and handmade objects, and between Tibet and Europe. A third paper, compares the iconography of the Mahabodhi models to steles of the Eight Great Miracles, suggesting the possibility of other functions for these small souvenirs–as a tool to visualize pilgrimage and provide *darsan* of the eight great Buddhist pilgrimage sites. A final paper reveals how and why a Chinese Buddhist temple in Macao has been excluded from the dominant Portuguese/Christian narrative but still thrives to this day. This gathering of papers provides a picture of the possibilities of engaging with separate but adjacent fields.

Texts, Language, and Literature 2

Reflecting on the Śākyabhikshus: Building on L. S. Cousins' Proposal

M. K. Edwards Leese (Independent)

It has been two decades since the deeply-missed Lance Cousins published "Sākiyabhikkhu/Sakyabhikkhu/Śākyabhikṣu: A Mistaken Link to the Mahāyāna?" in *Nagoya Studies in Indian Culture and Buddhism: Saṃbhāṣā* 23 (2003): 1–27. There he gave his reasons for dismissing Gregory Schopen's claim that the Śākyabhikshu and Mahāyana movements were one and the same. Cousin's survey of textual sources supported the work of Richard Cohen whose findings were based largely on ca. late-fifth century inscriptions from the Buddhist site of Ajanta. Curiously, since then, subsequent scholarship has largely put Cousin's cogent points aside, whereas Schopen's claims have received greater acceptance.

In part, that acceptance perhaps can be associated with a revised dating for the emergence of Mahāyana scriptures. Among the early Mahāyana texts recently discovered in Gandhara and Afghanistan are those which predate Ajanta's fifth century Śākyabhikshu inscriptions (possibly the earliest grouping of such records), by varying numbers of centuries. As for the end-point of the Ajanta corpus, it seems to coincide with India's earliest dateable self-described Mahāyana inscription. From eastern India, that record dates to ca. 505 CE. and categorically links Śākyabhikshus with the Mahāyana.

But the matter does not end there. Cousins' evidence from the *Tripitaka* and elsewhere reveals a basic linkage between the Śākyabhikshu movement and *nikāya* teachings. On further exploration, the linkages are numerous: their extent and nature require still deeper investigation. Moreover, recent work on types of literature discovered in the northwest and elsewhere suggests that certain of the viewpoints about Buddhas and Bodhisattvas adopted by the Mahāyana were neither unique nor exclusive. Rather, shared transformative thinking grew alongside the acquisition of separately distinct views among both localized and widely dispersed movements.

Relying on inscriptions, datable textual sources, imagery and architecture, this paper will outline steps taken by the Śākyabhikshu community as it progresssed during the fifth and sixth centuries. In so doing, the paper will attempt to draw lines between its approach and that of Mahāyana, leading to the point where co-option and absorption by the latter ultimately left its mark.

Quoting as Curating: The *Laṅkāvatāra Sūtra* as Cited for Teachings of Meditation in the Great Debate of bSam yas

Tiantian Cai (University of Wisconsin-Madison)

This paper approaches a doctrinal debate about the way of meditation and enlightenment between Buddhist suddenists represented by a Chinese Ch'an master Moheyan 摩訶衍 and Tibetan gradualists around the late 8th century in Tibet. The major focus is the intertextuality in historical writings of the debate: one is *Dunwu dacheng zhenglijue* 頓悟大乘正理決 by Wang Xi 王錫; another is *Bhāvanākrama*, a meditative teaching by Kamalaśīla. Given that *the Laṅkāvatāra Sūtra* (hereafter, *the Laṅka*) significantly influenced Chinese Ch'an transition and was extensively quoted from both the gradualist and suddenist, the study, on the one hand, examines how the *Laṅka* was treated as scriptural authority in *Dunwu dacheng zhenglijue* 頓悟大乘正理決 (hereafter, *Zhenglijue*) by Moheyan; on the other hand, it investigates how the *Laṅka* became cited and played critical roles in *Bhāvanākrama* (the stages of meditation, hereafter, BhK), to the extent that the representative of the gradualist, Kamalaśīla, made delicate illustration about the underlying logic to convey the idea of gradual meditation. The study finds that intertextuality not only is applied as strategy for legitimation but also reveals the dynamics between different standpoints in a debate for authority. It sheds light on potential factors and aspects for the divergent interpretation on texts, which pushes the boundaries between suddenist and gradualists in ways of perceiving plausible synthesis and similarities. I argue that, on the one hand, Kamalaśīla strategically cited *the Laṅka* to underline the stepping model of reasoning as a necessity in insight meditation for legitimatization, inducing "correct" reading on *the Laṅka* and opposing the derivative reading made by suddenists. On the other hand, the suddenists' selective quotations, instead of directly denying the necessity of practice, shows a shift from meditative cultivation to a sudden experiential realization of non-conceptuality. I argue that neither Kamalaśīla nor Mo he yan could represent what is the genuine reading on the *Laṅka*. Rather, their commonness in deploying scriptural authority implies a common strategy of legitimization. The need for legitimization and corresponding variegated interpretations on quotations induces the insufficiency of self-consistence, which both sides tried to remedy each meditation diagram, yet leaving unsatisfied self-justifications and limits.

Texts, Language, and Literature 3

Boundaries or Hierarchies? Cultural Incorporation in the Narratives of Tibetan Imperial Templecraft

Martin A. Mills (University of Aberdeen)

The salience of boundaries as a universal organiser of human affairs derives, in large part, from the post-war emergence of ethnicity and nationalism as central vehicles for the discussion of identity, a position which in itself was informed both by the United Nations' rejection of empire as any basis for political recognition or

international relations and by the assumption of formal equality between self-determining groups. However, much of Buddhist history is dominated by the reach of imperial systems and powers, whose primary dispositions were towards (i) the *hierarchical* organisation of both cultural and religious traditions and of populations and subordinate polities, and (ii) the centripetal *incorporation* of key facets of subordinated cultures. Such features are common to imperial systems from the Roman through to the British, Ottoman and Ching, requiring radically different approaches to understanding inter- and intracultural dynamics.

This paper will examine the Buddhist narrative traditions regarding the early Tibetan imperial period, and particularly those tenth-eleventh century post-dynastic *gter ma* accounts related to emperor *Srong btsan sgam po*, inaugurator of the First Diffusion of Mahāyāna Buddhism to Tibet, and founder of the Rasa Trülnang *tsuklag-khang* (*ra sa 'phrul snang gtsug lag khang* - more commonly known as the Jokhang Temple), the ceremonial basis of the city of Lhasa. Narratives regarding the founding of the Rasa Trülnang assert the hierarchical 'alignment' (*gtsug lag* – literally, 'crown and limb') of the new empire's political and cultural segments, both in terms of internal organisation (to recognise the different sections of the Tibetan populace) and external architecture (recognising the Indian, Chinese and Tibetan styles). More subtly, the narratives of the temple's founding – famously obstructed by the local *lha 'dre* or demonic spirits – demonstrate a careful narrative hierarchy between the different ritual traditions (from Indian tantric traditions through to Tang dynasty *feng shui* and Bön rites of invocation), all of which are seen to exist in support of a larger Mahāyāna templecraft. It is only later, in the wake of the fall of Mongol overlordship in Tibet, that such a segmented imperial approach to cultural organisation comes to be partially replaced by a more unified national vision of culture.

The Inner and Outer Bounds of Buddhist Conversion

Hélène de Brux (LMU Munich / EPHE Paris)

Conversion entails a before and an after. According to the vivid stories of the *Mūlasarvāstivāda-Vinaya* which this presentation will focus on, the turning point between these two moments corresponds to the transformative teaching of the Buddhist *dharma* leading to the vision of the four noble truths. But although this climax plays a well-defined and decisive role – one of cognitive achievements and soteriological guidance –, it is not accessible to anyone. Reaching it necessarily requires the accumulation of merit (*puṇya* and *kuśalamūla*), the cultivation of faith (*prasāda* and *śraddhā*), and the arising of a proper mental disposition (*santati*).

By conditioning the transition from non-Buddhist to Buddhist, these factors disclose a strong concern for readiness in the convert and efficiency from the converter. But what happens when such requirements are not met? While some conversions are unfruitful, others seem to disregard the aforementioned conditions, such as the forced ordinations of Devadatta or Nanda. What purpose do these narratives serve and to which extent do they challenge the expected boundaries of Buddhist conversion?

This paper will attempt to answer these questions while shedding light on the ways Buddhist narrative literature plays around with the concept of conversion and explores its margins and grey areas.

Education

Play and Pedagogy in Buddhist Studies

Nick Swann (University of South Wales)

The importance of play in early years learning is well-attested, as skills and knowledge are developed through games and puzzles rather than imparted through didactic learning. Over time didactic learning takes over, until play is little used and even when it is students are typically conscious that it is an educational tactic rather than an

apparently enjoyable end in itself. With adult learners, play - often in the form of role-play or perhaps a boardgame that demonstrates a feature of e.g. economics – tends to be used to stress-test knowledge and understanding and put it into action rather than impart learning *ab initio*.

This paper explores the potential for play to be used with adult learners learning Pali. A formal, philological, approach to learning Pali can be a barrier to those unfamiliar with inflected Indo-European languages, and while the rote learning of grammar and vocabulary may suit some learners, many find the idea overwhelming and off-putting. Immersing students in a 'choose your own adventure' style story, supported by other game activities, adds emotional investment to the learning experience and puts grammar and vocabulary into a context more relatable than lists of words and tables of paradigms. Note that I *do* consider these lists and tables to be crucial to an in-depth understanding of Pali, but they can be introduced at a much later stage.

Beginning with a brief pedagogical analysis of games and learning in Buddhism more generally (from canonical sources to the present day), this paper then discusses the materials developed to test the proof of concept of a gaming approach to learning Pali. The development of these materials sees Buddhist Studies straddling many disciplinary boundaries, including creative writing, art, game design, and education.

A Division Worth Upholding? Three Nyingma Approaches to Negotiating the Boundary between Traditional Monastic Colleges (bshad grwa) and Modern Universities in India

Nicholas S. Hobhouse (University of Hong Kong)

Before the mid-20th century, the various schools of Tibetan Buddhism upheld a range of traditional monastic educational norms, including in curricular matters, pedagogy, and the award of degrees (see e.g. Dreyfus 2003, Tarab Tulku 2000). After the upheavals of that period, these norms have come into contact with the norms of modern secular education, albeit that this encounter has taken different forms in different locations.

This paper will investigate one aspect of this encounter: the boundary between traditional monastic colleges (*bshad grwa*) and modern universities in India. Focusing primarily on the Nyingma (*rnying ma*) school of Tibetan Buddhism, in order to allow for direct comparison, this paper will examine three institutions, each of which have negotiated that boundary in different ways: the Ngagyur Nyingma Institute of Namdroling Monastery, which offers a traditional monastic education but has also been influenced in certain ways by the norms of modern universities, the Sikkim Institute of Higher Nyingma Studies, which has formal affiliation to Sampurnanand Sanskrit University, and the Central Institute for Higher Tibetan Studies, which is a 'deemed university' and offers a Nyingma programme alongside several other programmes to both monastics and laypeople.

Drawing upon official documents outlining the likes of the curricula, pedagogical methods, daily and annual schedules, examinations, and degrees awarded at these institutions, this paper will analyse the challenges of negotiating the boundary between traditional monastic colleges and modern universities. It will also draw upon interviews conducted at these and other institutions during fieldwork in summer 2022, and upon the published writings of various contemporary Tibetan Buddhist masters, to consider whether the long-term survival of rigorous Tibetan Buddhist learning is best served by the erosion or maintenance of that boundary.

Buddhists Study in a Buddhist Studies Course: On the Training Course for Religious Groups Organized by the Renmin University of China

Rusha Jin (University of Edinburgh)

Since 2006, the short-period training course called "Training Course for Patriotic religious figures" organized by the Department of Religious Studies of Renmin University of China has been enrolling students from the heads of the national and provincial and autonomous regional religious groups of the five major religious groups, including Buddhism, Taoism, Islam, Catholicism and Christianity. The course is organized by the Renmin

University of China under the commission of the United Front Work Department of the CPC Central Committee and the Ministry of Education to offer academic training to leaders of religious groups. Although the starting point of the program is rather political, in China, where a relatively strict boundary exists between religion and secular, it is rare for ordinary university students and people from religious groups to study in the same classroom, and it brings influences to both sides. The purpose of this paper is to take this training course as an example to discuss the impact on the boundary between students and faculty members of Buddhist Studies and Buddhists when they meet in an academic environment, especially in the Chinese context.

Philosophy

A Stepwise Layered Approach Using the Concept of Emptiness as Interpreted by Kunkyen Jamyang Shepda (1648-1721)

Dobdon Maksarov (SOAS)

Buddhism is characterised by a non-dogmatic approach, that is confirmed by various schools and streams that still exist today. The non-dogmatic approach of Buddhism is confirmed by the words of the Buddha who said that while listening to the teachings, followers should not rely on the words but on the meaning behind them, when considering the meaning, followers should not rely on conventional meaning but should look for the ultimate meaning (*Akshayamatinirdesha Sutra*), and that every word should first be examined and then accepted, even the words of the Buddha (*Ghanavyuha Sutra*). This led to the emergence of various Buddhist schools with their own interpretations of emptiness, as well as philosophical discussions among them in the form of disputes. Doctrinal differences lead buddhologists to create strict boundaries between various Buddhist schools. However, Tibetan tradition proposes to consider various schools not in isolation but as a "ladder of views": without stepping on the first rung, it is not possible to ascend to the top rung. Thus, the concept of emptiness as presented by prasaṅgika cannot be fully understood without an understanding of the viewpoints of other schools, in particular vaibhāṣika, sautrāntika, cittamātra, and svatantrika. I propose to consider this stepwise layered approach using the concept of emptiness as interpreted by Kunkyen Jamyang Shepda (1648-1721), a Tibetan scholar of Drepung Gomang Monastery, which belongs to the Gelug tradition of Tibetan Buddhism. Kunkyen Jamyang Shepda explains that the vaibhāṣika view on emptiness was refuted by sautrāntika; the sautrāntika view was refuted by cittamātra, the cittamātra view was refuted by mādhyamaka-svatantrika, whose view was in turn refuted by mādhyamaka-prasaṅgika. In that case, denying another view does not mean a complete disagreement but the development or further refining of that view. This stepwise approach blurs the distinctions between the various Buddhist schools and makes the constructed boundaries less solid.

Exploring the Boundaries of Buddhist Logic: Challenges and Opportunities

Taryn Sue (University of Chicago)

Two roundtable discussions at the 2021 meeting of the American Academy of Religion underscored the ways in which Buddhism remains caught in its contested identities. One challenged Buddhist scholars' continued commitment to the study of temporal and cultural "others" while the other questioned Buddhism's continued exclusion from philosophy departments in western academic institutions. These discussions made evident the bifurcation of Buddhism into categories of "religion" and "philosophy," exposing the ways the academy has continued to divide its object of study along neat—but artificial—lines.

Buddhist logic in the Tibetan tradition presents a challenge to this divided approach given the ways in which it transcends strictly bifurcated categories of religion versus philosophy. While it has largely been analyzed through

the lens of philosophy by western scholarship, we see that it is also implicated in community, identity, and legitimation.

In my paper, I forward that a fuller picture of Buddhist logic emerges when we resist such imposed boundaries. I begin with an analysis of Dharmakīrti's definition of the characteristics of a valid argument, the triply-qualified sign (*trirūpahetu*), before turning to Tāranātha's hagiographic account of the life of Dharmakīrti. Respectively, these represent what I refer to as "top-down" and "bottom-up" paradigms for analyzing Buddhist logic, the first acknowledging strictly philosophical dimensions and the second examining the significance of logic in religious formations. Finally, I analyze a Tibetan debate on the triply-qualified sign, positing it as site of convergence between the two paradigms, wherein the dynamic and changeable intellectual practices of ordinary monks and nuns come up against the static dimensions of settled doctrine. Thus, by examining stories and hagiographies as well as the debate practices of ordinary

In Search of the Whole: Intuiting Reality in Quantum Mechanics and Buddhist Philosophy

Allan Furic (University of Edinburgh)

The purpose of this paper is to present the preliminary reflexions of a doctoral research revolving around the holism/interconnectedness of nature, through the comparison of quantum mechanics and Buddhist philosophy. As it appears, the apparent significant divergence between the science of quanta grounded in advanced mathematics and the empirical method, and the predominantly soteriological dharmic religion, could lead one to posit the impervious character of both disciplines to any teachings coming from each other. However, it seems that some strands of Buddhism – most notably in the form of 'interdependence' in Mahāyāna Buddhism – and several of the intricacies of the quantum world – the most famous being entanglement and wave-particle duality – have independently chanced upon a similar principle of wholeness in nature, one that is inherently different from our ordinary apprehension of the world. While one needs to exert caution to eschew the pitfall of simplistic parallelism, the comparison of quantum mechanics and Buddhist philosophy on the ground of wholeness and interconnection remains worthwhile precisely because it opens a dialogue between the disciplines, thereby allowing to question the boundary between science and religion, as well as our own perceptive boundary of the world. As such, the paper intends to introduce this comparison in three ways: first through a particular attention to the comparative methodology required for such an analogy to be made, then by exploratorily questioning the equivalence of the wholistic worldview on both sides, and finally by adducing the potential ways in which this comparison sheds light on the relationship between observers and the universe, between us and the world.

Image and Identity

Buddha, Dharma and TikTok: Lamas, the Sangha and Social Media

Jill Sudbury (Independent)

Historically, accessing Buddhist teachings on the Tibetan Plateau has been characterised by intense physicality. The literature abounds with accounts of students travelling vast distances and overcoming terrible hardships in order to personally receive teachings and initiations.

In 2023, however, that initial contact with a Buddhist teacher may be a 'suggested reel' on a social media platform, and a potential student may initiate contact via a 'DM' or 'direct message'. Social media platforms such as Instagram and TikTok have expanded on previous social media and video-sharing platforms such as YouTube, and, since the onset of the Covid pandemic, media such as Zoom.

Following the Chinese annexation of Tibet, Tibetan Buddhist communities have had to quickly adopt new responses to accessing teachings whilst rigorously maintaining fragile transmission lineages. This has also included a new international audience as well as the communities remaining inside Tibet. His Holiness the Dalai Lama has been a prominent user of contemporary methods of communication and has pioneered a significant global outreach.

This paper will explore how a new generation of Tibetan Buddhist teachers are engaging with social media, and how they communicate with a continually evolving Sangha. Some have dispensed with the traditional hierarchical formalities of the teacher-student relationship, and have become their own gatekeepers. This may include divulging aspects of their lives that previously would not have been revealed, from gym selfies to mental health difficulties, viewed through the intensely visual prism of social media platforms. Other teachers encourage discussion of issues such as environmental damage, animal welfare and gender that speak beyond a Buddhist audience. Whilst displaying a broadening hybridity of communication within the Sangha, the limitations of social media platforms also raise issues around the boundaries of connection, transmission and authenticity.

Texts, Language, and Literature 4

The Redescription of Buddhism by Modern Tamiḻ Śaivas

Jesse Pruitt (University of Toronto)

It was in the warm winter of 1903, in the Mylapore neighborhood of Madras, that a Tamil Śaivite from eastern Jaffna, Śrī Lanka, presented his "Refutation of the Buddhist Religion" (Puttamata Kaṇṭaṉam) to a gathered audience, having penned it only six days prior. The author, Nā. Katiraivēl Piḷḷai, was transparent about his motivations: it was high time that someone respond to the slander voiced against his own religion by the loudest mouthpieces of Buddhism on either side of the Palk Strait: the Colombo Theosophical Society and the South Indian Sakya Sangha founded by the Tamiḻ Dalit convert Ayothee Dass Panditar. More obscurely, it seems he also blamed Śrī Lankan Buddhists for the destruction of the temple in his home village. It would be two and a half decades later that Piḷḷai's student, and biographer, Tiru. Vi. Ka. writes and self-publishes a work titled "Buddhism in Tamiḻ Texts" (Tamiḻ Nūlkaḷil Pauttam), striking a far more conciliatory tone which claims Buddhism as an essential feature of Tamiḻ heritage. This paper will examine these two texts, presenting their arguments and querying their available archives, while asking what such a lineal change of heart exhibited in the space between teacher and disciple says about the malleability of boundaries between Śaiva and Bauddha, Tamiḻ and Siṅhala, as well as insider and outsider in 20th century South Asian thought. At the dusk of empire and dawn of nations, through these cases we can consider how orientalist knowledge percolated and was mobilized by representatives of a linguistic community which had for centuries little, if any, participation in Buddhism, but had also always been immediate neighbors with Sinhala-speaking people, the authors of a peculiar narrative of insular Buddhist custodianship. Needless to say, studying these texts will also contribute to the history of two religious and linguistic communities' relationship, one which boiled over only a few decades subsequent to the publication of these texts.

Marking Boundaries in the Buddhist Publishing World of Republican China

Gregory Adam Scott (University of Manchester)

In the early twentieth century, lay and monastic Buddhists in China produced thousands of new publications, including scriptural texts, commentaries, monographs, and periodicals. As the range of titles grew, however, publishers had to categorise these works in book catalogues for their reading public, drawing in part upon canonical schema but also adding entirely new genres to the corpus. My presentation will review several major

Chinese Buddhist book catalogues from the 1910s to the 1930s and explore how their paratexts and internal organisation worked to help readers make sense of what was a potentially bewildering array of texts. In doing so I will examine how Buddhist publishers defined new types of textual boundaries, both those internal to the Buddhist publishing world, and those that marked off Buddhist books from texts seen as external to the tradition. By exploring the ways in which these publishers sought to structure their world of Buddhist texts, we can better understand how ideas about Buddhist knowledge and teaching were changing, and how the vibrant Buddhist print culture of this era helped to shape an innovative renewal of Buddhist learning and practice.

Is Asura a Cursed Being? Buddhist and Jain Cosmologies in Contest

Xiaoqiang Meng (Leiden University)

For a long time in the Indian cultural sphere, the Asura was a highly visible mythic figure prevalent in visual art, epic literature, legends and folklores, etc., who was also allotted an unusual position in the mythologies and cosmologies of both Buddhism and Jainism. However, how did ancient Buddhists and Jains approach the Asura in their worlding projects, and why did they ever bother? This paper argues that a shared narrative strategy to position the Asura is attested both in the Buddhist and Jain cosmological traditions, i.e., using the readapted *mythos* of the Deva-Asura war (*devāsurasaṃgrāma*) in their respective apocalyptic/soteriological contexts; and that the same path leads to their diverging and even mutual-contesting goals.

In this paper, a diachronic and inter-school overview of the pre-*Kośa* Buddhist cosmologies is provided based mainly on *Abhidharmic* texts such as the *Lokotthāna*- and *Lokaprajñapti*-texts and the *Vibhāṣā* compendia. With this background sorted out, this paper traces the evolution/transmission of the *devāsurasaṃgrāma* myth down to chapter 5 *Tiryagloka* of the *Saddharmasmṛtyupasthānasūtra*. Then comparing this Buddhist version with, among others, the Śvetāmbara Jain *Viyāhapaṇṇatti* (also known as the *Bhagavatīsūtra*), this paper analyses the common narrative framework and exclusive sectarian characters attested in each text. At last, it is argued that by referring to the same myth-framework which is reshaped to serve their respective soteriological ends, a contested yet permeable boundary between a pan-Indian myth archetype and its new religious interpretations, and between the Buddhist and Jain cosmological imaginations, is explored. Exploring this boundary, we can better clarify sectarian identities-cum-anxieties which were intensified in the knowledge market of premodern South Asia.

Sex, Sexuality, and Asceticism

Mononormativity, Compersion, and the Four Immeasurables

Hin Sing Yuen*, Luu Zörlein and Sven Walter (Osnabrück University)

Mononormativity' refers to a set of assumptions according to which monogamy is the only 'normal' and 'natural' form of romantic/sexual relationships. Mononormative norms impose socially constructed boundaries on the partners in dyadic relationships – they are expected to share quality time, love, and intimacy, with each other, but not with anyone outside the dyad.

While polygamy has been tolerated in the past in predominantly Buddhist regions and countries with strong Buddhist influences, contemporary Buddhist communities often adhere to mononormative norms. Conversely, Western countries, in which monogamy has long been the norm, witness a constant rise in *consensual non-monogamy* (CNM) – constellations in which all partners agree to have extradyadic sexual or romantic relationships. As more people question the validity of mononormativity and turn to Buddhism for spiritual and ethical guidance, there is a need for a dialogue between Buddhism and CNM.

This paper contributes to this conversation by 'translating' the concept of 'compersion' – used in CNM to refer to a positive emotional reaction to one's partner's enjoying time and/or intimacy with another person (sort of 'the opposite of jealousy') – into a Buddhist framework of the four immeasurables and their near enemies. We argue that such a Buddhist perspective can soften the mononormative bounds. While many Buddhists believe that the cultivation of the four immeasurables in a love relationship is only possible in a monogamous context, we argue that it may also be possible in CNM, where all of the four immeasurables can manifest as aspects of compersion (but also of the near enemies). Our intention is not to define compersion nor to argue that it is the only permissible response to one's partner's extradyadic involvements, but to make it intelligible for Buddhists and non-Buddhists alike. This approach, we argue, not only enriches our understanding of compersion, but also contributes to people's flourishing in all kinds of relationships and enables Buddhists and non-Buddhists to reconsider the alleged legitimacy of mononormativity.

"Ladyboys" (katoey) in the Renunciant World: Religious Experiences of Thai Transgendered People in Northern Thailand

Amnuaypond Kidpromma and James Taylor (Chiang Mai University)

This paper explores the contested boundaries between Buddhism and other religions in the religious life and experiences of transgendered practitioners in northern Thailand, who seek their renunciant quest as practicing Buddhists and/or as devotees of Hindu gods and deities. Buddhist practitioners who transgress gender boundaries, although they may be considered successful in their respective religious practice, are not accepted in a normative Buddhist context where religious leadership and authority are in the domain of males. In the dominant view, only Buddhist men are regarded as fit to become ordained monks and provide a field of merit (*naa bun* [นาบุญ]). Transgendered persons or "ladyboys" (*katoey* [กะเทย]) can be ordained in Thailand, however their gender identity is likely to draw criticism and they are looked down by both the *sangha* and lay community. Transgressing traditional gender boundary is condemned as unnatural (resulting from bad karma) and seen as going against religious and moral norms. Accordingly, some transgendered persons seek comfort in *ashrams* and in Hindu gods and goddesses as their refuge. Other "ladyboys" have become Buddhist nuns (mae-chii [แม่ชี], dressed in white robes and observing the Buddhist eight precepts (*aṭṭha-sīla*). In one case, "ladyboys" have established a unique nunnery where transgendered Buddhists can undergo temporary initiation and follow the eight precepts as a *mae-chii*. These boundaries can appear solid and rigid, but in fact, they can be fluid and contested. This paper argues that although normative renunciation is prescribed for males, not every man fits in well with a normative model of renunciation. Similar to female renouncers who aspire to become ordained bhikkhunis, transgendered males have to find their own renunciant path, and challenge the gender boundaries that prohibit them from doing so. Indeed, while spiritual renunciation is, in a textual sense, "genderless," the secular pathway to full renunciation is gendered.

Demarking the Middle in the Pali Vinaya

Antony Fiorucci (Uppsala University)

The 'middle way' (*majjhimā paṭipadā*) is central concept in Buddhist thought. As exposited in the narrative context of the Buddha's awakening, the middle way is stated to lie in between two 'extremes' (*anta*) to be ideally eschewed in the soteriological path to liberation. These two extremes are presented as the performance of harsh asceticism (*attakilamatha*) on the hand and engagement in sensual pleasures, or *kāma*, on the other. But how, exactly, is this dichotomy perceived and where are the boundaries drawn? What kinds of actions and activities are viewed in terms of sensible monastic conduct and what actions are viewed in terms of sensual or ascetic excess? And how does this come into view in the program of monastic law?

The early Buddhist monastic tradition navigated a complex social terrain, where sensual conduct associated with *kāma* is viewed as the ethical prerogative of householders and where harsh asceticism is frequently ascribed to

members other renunciatory groups (*titthiya*). Articulating a program of discipline that keenly avoids both these perceived extremes is a recurrent concern of the monastic legislators who compiled the Pali Vinaya.

This paper investigates this dialectic between licit and illicit monastic conduct through examination of the regulations found in the Pali Vinaya. Utilizing a theoretical approach with a focus on materiality, corporeality, and the senses, it will elucidate exactly what kinds of embodied material practices are deemed in Pali monastic law to encroach upon the terrain of *kāma* and what kinds of practices are viewed in terms of ascetic excess. It suggests that analysis of the Pali Vinaya reveals what can be called a *normative monastic sensibility* and that such a sensibility serves to instantiate embodied boundaries between those inside and outside the Buddhist monastic milieu.

Buddhist Archaeology

Iconography in Communications: The Six Stupas in Fanhualou

Ziyi Shao (SOAS)

Situated in the northeast of the Ningshougong Palace (Tranquil Longevity Palace), and constructed between the 37th year and the 41st year of the Qianlong reign (1772 - 1776), Fanhualou houses one of the most complicated Tibetan Buddhist pantheons throughout history, with six distinctive and sumptuous stupas. Each stupa is more than two meters' high and over one meter's wide, dominating one side room on the ground floor.

The iconographies of the six stupas are all different, and constitute an unprecedented combination of both Tibetan stupas and Chinese pagodas. Their hydrated visual styles do not conform to the boundaries of Tibetan and Chinese Buddhist visual traditions, and their religious meanings and functions remain undiscovered, not to mention their relationships with the contents of their respective room, dedicated to tantras of the Prajñāpāramitā, Father, Mother, Yoga, Caryā and Kriyā.

Built on a historical understanding of the pictorial and spatial concept at that time, in this presentation I will try to solve the myth through focusing on the how the unique design of the six stupas were generated, which was initiated by the emperor and collaborated with court artisans and Tibetan clergies. The entangled and dynamic interactions will be proved to be central to understand the agency of the disparate participants of stupa making and the stupas themselves, and they will raise more interesting questions over how the stupas were translated and appropriated in order to play a decisive role on formulating both the religious and politic rhetoric of the whole building, and how the communications among different ethnic/religious groups contributed to their hybridity of styles and iconographies.

Exploring Boundaries of Buddhist Archaeology: Re-evaluating the Identification of Ajatashatru Stupa through Recent Excavations at Rajgir

Ishani Sinha (SOAS)

The Buddhist literatures testify that after mahaparinirvana of Gautam Buddha a part of the corporeal remains of Buddha was brought to Rajgir, capital of the ancient Magadha kingdom, by the contemporary ruler Ajatashatru and a stupa was erected over it. So far, a structure opposite the Venuvana area in Rajgir is believed to represent this stupa. Primarily this identification was based upon the reference of Xuan Zang about its location. However, there are variations in other records regarding the location. Further, and more importantly, the physical construction and attributes of this structure do not agree with that of a stupa and therefore it is not convincing to accept it as a sepulchral edifice. Hence exploring other options in this regard was very much desired.

Excavations of Banaganga mound in Rajgir conducted about two decades back by Archaeological Survey of India have revealed a square brick stupa which is strikingly indicative of the structure being the actual Ajatashatru

stupa. The location, morphology, methodology of construction and the artifacts are suggestive of it although surprisingly there is not even a hint of it in the published references. To further supplement this identification there are other comparable stupas of similar chronological bracket and architectural features. The proposed paper attempts to analyze and interpret the findings of this recent excavation at Banaganga in order to substantiate that the identification of Ajatashatru stupa needs a review and calls for a shift in favour of the new discovery.