



LEKHA

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The Robert H. N. Ho Family Foundation Center
for Buddhist Studies at Stanford University



Lekha is a Sanskrit word for letter or writing

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*Encounter between the previous Buddha
Dīpaṅkara and Sumati/Sumedha/
Megha, who is predicted to be reborn
as Śākyamuni, as depicted on the Sikri
stūpa. Lahore Museum, 13" x 13 ¾"*

IN THIS ISSUE:

3 CO-DIRECTOR MESSAGE

4 HIGHLIGHTS

SPECIAL EVENT:

Jack Kornfield, Spirit Rock Center

BUDDHISM IN THE MODERN WORLD LECTURES:

His Holiness Chamgon Kenting Tai Situpa, India

TT & WF CHAO DISTINGUISHED BUDDHIST PRACTITIONER LECTURES:

Venerable Ajahn Viradhammo, Tisarana Buddhist Monastery, Canada

THE EVANS-WENTZ LECTURE:

Bernard Faure, Columbia University

TT & WF CHAO BUDDHIST ART SERIES:

Wei-Cheng Lin, University of Chicago
Jinah Kim, Harvard University

SHINNYO-EN VISITING PROFESSOR SEMINAR AND LECTURE:

Paul Groner, Professor Emeritus at University of Virginia

HWEI TAI SEMINAR:

Richard Salomon, University of Washington

SILK ROAD LECTURES:

Erica C.D. Hunter, SOAS, United Kingdom

JAPANESE BUDDHISM LECTURES:

Max Moerman, Barnard College

TIBETAN STUDIES INITIATIVE:

Donald Lopez Jr., University of Michigan

GRADUATE STUDENTS WORKSHOP:

Ronald Davidson, Fairfield University
Paul Copp, University of Chicago
Jason Neelis, Wilfrid Laurier University, Canada

16 STUDENT REFLECTIONS

Adeana McNicholl
Sangyop Lee

18 HCBSS NEWS

Michaela Mross
Alex Kaloyanides
Dr. C. Julia Huang

CO-DIRECTOR'S MESSAGE

The big news for the Center is that Michaela Mross will join our faculty in September, marking the return of Japanese Buddhism as a major concentration of our program. Michaela comes to us having just completed a postdoc at Berkeley (she received her PhD at the Ludwig-Maximilians-University in Munich and also studied in the doctoral program at Komazawa for five years). Most of her work, combining a mixture of classical textual studies with fieldwork, has been on Japanese Buddhist ritual, with a focus on music. In particular, she has worked on the genre of Buddhist chant (*shōmyō* 声明) known as *kōshiki* 講式, particularly as performed by *Sōtō* monks. In the next academic year she will revive Carl Bielefeldt's popular introduction to Zen course as well as a new course on religion in anime and manga. Michaela comes in the nick of time since, from September, Paul will take a well-deserved sabbatical year.

In other news, Alexandra Kaloyanides, now in the second year of her two-year postdoc at the Center, will offer a much-anticipated graduate seminar on anthropology and Buddhism, and attempt to complete work on her book on the American missionary encounter with Burmese Buddhism before leaving for her job in the Department of Religious Studies at the University of North Carolina about this time next year. We will be joined this year by Jens-Uwe Hartmann from the University of Munich who, as this year's Shinnyo-en Visiting Professor, will offer a graduate seminar and participate in Center activities in the winter quarter.

Last year, in addition to a full program of speakers and seminars in our regular event series, we hosted the California Buddhist Studies Graduate Students Conference, a two-day biannual conference involving faculty and graduate students from UC Berkeley, UC Santa Barbara, UCLA, UC Santa Cruz, UC Riverside, USC, and Santa Clara University. In September of this year – again in addition to our regular programs – we will host a symposium for the 2015–16 recipients of the dissertation fellowships offered by the Robert H. N. Ho Family Foundation Program in Buddhist Studies in conjunction with the American Council of Learned Societies. As we make final arrangements for our regular program of events for the coming academic year, preparations are already underway for a celebration of the twentieth anniversary of the founding of the center for Buddhist



John Kieschnick

Studies at Stanford to be held more than a year from now during the fall term of 2017–18.

This year's recipient of the "Best Undergraduate Paper on Buddhism" award went to Jackson Roach for a project he completed as a student in Jason Protass' course "Buddhism and Death." In addition to providing a survey of Buddhist board games, Jackson designed a working copy in wood of a Buddhist game of his own, with one player taking the role of Mara and another the role of a bodhisattva, incorporating principles of Buddhist doctrine, described with scholarly citations in the paper.

Finally, congratulations are due to two of our PhD students, Jason Protass and Brenda Falk, who received their PhD degrees this year, successfully defending their dissertations, Jason's entitled "Buddhist Monks and Chinese Poems: Song Dynasty Monastic Literary Culture," and Brenda's "The Road to Osorezan: A Case Study of a Pilgrimage Site in Contemporary Japan."

John Kieschnick
The Robert H. N. Ho Family Foundation Professor,
Religious Studies

SPECIAL EVENT

Inner Strength & Kindness: Practices for a Wise Life

Jack Kornfield



Jack Kornfield (right),
Jane Shaw (left)

On November 10, Jack Kornfield gave a talk in the campus-wide lecture series “Contemplation by Design.” Kornfield said wise education includes the heart as well as the mind. What does it mean to apply mindfulness and compassion in your work and daily life? Greet every aspect of life, including hatred and death, with graciousness and compassion. Training in mindfulness and compassion entails embodying flexibility, integrity, mutual respect and mutual understanding.

No amount of modern technology can stop warfare, racism, environmental destruction and tribalism. What is required is the inner development of the heart. We all should supplement our

intellectual curriculum with that of the wisdom of the heart and inner intelligence in order to change ourselves and the world for the better.

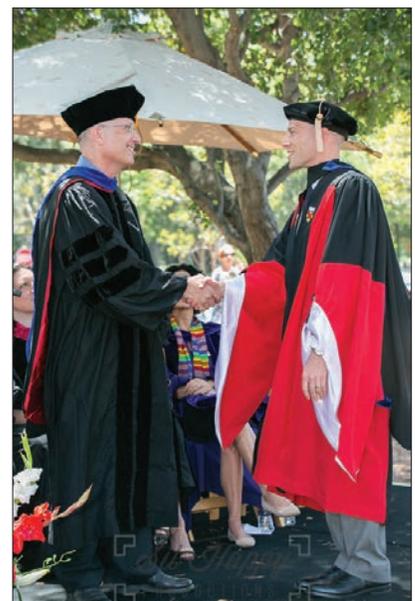
Dr. Kornfield said that neuroscientific studies confirm that the power of training in mindfulness and compassion can foster health and wellbeing. We can all learn to do this. The human capacity for flexibility and resiliency can be trained through contemplative arts and skills. This capacity is innate in people, but we need training or practice to bring it out. He spoke of different ways of training in and practicing mindfulness and compassion throughout the evening and illustrated them with captivating and amusing stories.

by Jason Protass

I always felt a sense of belonging with Stanford Buddhist Studies’ large family of alumni. Yet somehow I had not expected that I too would one day become an alumnus. This spring I graduated from Stanford, and this autumn I will take up a position as Assistant Professor of Religious Studies at Brown University.

At the end of my graduate studies here at Stanford, I want to thank the many people and institutions that supported my work. With the assistance of the Ho Center for Buddhist Studies, I was able to present research at conferences, travel to archives, and collaborate with visiting scholars. During my years at Stanford, I have been humbled and thrilled to study together with our professors, and was lucky to live and work alongside a wonderful cohort of young scholars.

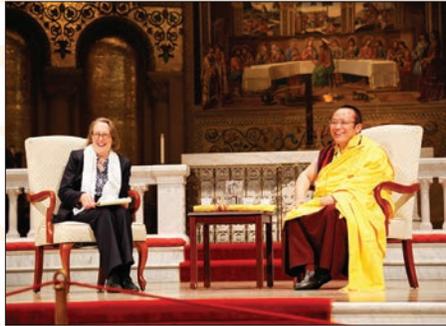
I look forward to new challenges and opportunities for developing Buddhist Studies at Brown, and will continue to nurture the karmic connections with Buddhist Studies at Stanford.



John Kieschnick (left), Jason Protass (right)

Truth in a Multi-Religious World

His Holiness Chamgon Kenting Tai Situpa



Chamgon Kenting Tai Situpa (left), Tai Situpa and Jane Shaw (center), Audience at the event, Stanford's Memorial Church

On May 9, His Holiness the 12th Chamgon Kenting Tai Situpa gave a lecture on the topic of “Truth in a Multi-Religious World” at Stanford’s Memorial Church. About 1,300 people, young and old, packed the church in order to hear him.

Speaking from the pulpit, the Tai Situpa began his address by emphasizing that truth is relevant to every living creature and the common interest of all is “Nobody likes to suffer; everyone wants to be happy.” That is the truth in a nutshell, according to him. Having said that, His Holiness elaborated on the distinction between relative truth and ultimate truth. Relative truth varies from individual to individual but the ultimate truth is the same for all. Whereas goodness is ultimate, evil is not. It is the good that transforms evil into good.

His Holiness continued by asking “What is most evil?” According to him, it is jealousy, not anger as one might guess. Much suffering comes from jealousy in its many different forms. The desires that make one suffer come from jealousy. When we suffer we tend to think “Why me?” When we see people we know happy and doing well, we usually ask, “Why not me?” He elaborated on how to deal with that feeling of jealousy. If we notice that we feel jealous, we should relax and examine our feeling.

By being mindful and aware of jealousy, it will dissolve. Jealousy can then become appreciation. For example, if someone is successful, we should realize how petty and appalling feelings of jealousy are. What happens after this realization is the thought, “Of course, why not? We want to be happy. So does everyone else. That person is happy because he or she is successful. We are happy for that person.” If we can practice this, we will come to the realization that no one wants to suffer and we will see what suffering is. We will have a taste of suffering in ourselves and in this way it will give rise to sympathy and respect for other living beings’ sufferings. Thus we will sincerely wish no one to suffer.

When someone else suffers, we should say or ask, “Why not me?” His Holiness asked the audience to repeat after him and to practice saying, “Why not me?” Then he continued to say that when someone else does well, instead of being jealous and thinking “Why not me?”, we should ask, “Why not them?” The Tai Situpa asked the audience to repeat after him and practice saying, “Why not them?” Once we can say this phrase and get accustomed to doing so, then the next step is to actually mean it when we say it. This way, we will rejoice in the wellbeing of others.

Next His Holiness turned to the topic of knowledge. He asked, “What is the source of the problems facing us?” It is our mind. He said that we are full of knowledge which is good, but if we don’t transform our knowledge, it cannot become wisdom. It is analogous to eating a lot of food. If we can digest food, we become healthy, but if we cannot, then we become obese. In the current century, we know too much. If we are not able to transform this knowledge into wisdom, we become knowledge-obese. Knowledge then is just information, which will become a burden, i.e. information overload, rather than a benefit. If we do not turn knowledge into wisdom, we may become proud of our knowledge and use it against those who do not possess such knowledge. If our knowledge is turned into wisdom, then everyone will benefit.

The Tai Situpa concluded by saying that he had attempted give a simple talk on a very complicated topic. His message may appear simple at first glance, but if we take his words to heart and begin to practice as he says, that is, to truly rejoice at the happiness and well-being of others, to suffer so others won’t have to, and to turn knowledge into wisdom for everyone’s benefit, his teachings run very deep indeed. His address was accessible, witty, inspirational, and much appreciated by all who attended.

Reflections on a Monastic Life

Venerable Ajahn Viradhammo

In November, Venerable Ajahn Viradhammo, the abbot of the Tisarana Buddhist Monastery in Canada, gave a fascinating talk on his journey to become a Buddhist monk and his subsequent monastic life. Motivated by trying to understand what his childhood experiences of deep silence were about and his longing for such experiences on a regular basis, Ven. Ajahn Viradhammo embarked on his search.

After traveling to India, his mind came into the same state of deep silence he experienced as a child and he came to understand what the experience was about and what his longing was for. He discovered that Theravada Buddhism, and in particular, Buddhist monasticism, in his case that of the Thai Forest Tradition, was what would provide the path to the awareness and the awakening of the mind that he sought. The strength of his conviction and faith led him to enter the Sangha in Thailand under the tutelage of Venerable Ajahn Chah. However, he faced many challenges in Thailand during his stay there, starting with the cultural and language barriers, the new and austere environment of the forest tradition, and the physical discomfort resulting from the hot weather, sleeping arrangements and food. Facing these challenges he came to understand the mind – what suffering is, the cause of suffering and the path to the cessation of suffering.

He realized that he was attached to the sense realm, and that his mind needed certain conditions to be happy and peaceful. Since he still had cravings for comfort, there was nowhere to go except to his own mind. Being with Venerable Ajahn Chah helped him achieve a sense of emptiness and to experience the four noble truths in his daily life.

Ven. Ajahn Viradhammo asked himself why he suffered. It was because he was attached to comfort. He wanted things to be other than they were, so he suffered. This constant reflection became a practice for him. He started to develop the spiritual character to be with the way things were, to be content with the way things were as he found them. He realized that the solution, or what Ajahn Chah called “the escape hatch,” was awareness or consciousness of the craving, i.e. the desire to have something beside what he had. Such a consciousness became a purification or “emotional enema.” It provided the freedom to watch suffering and the end of suffering. He began to appreciate the methodology of monasticism and the teaching of the four noble truths.

Just when he was getting used to Thailand, Ven. Ajahn Chah sent him to London. Now in a new environment, he experienced new sufferings due to his attachment to Thailand and his way of life there. He encountered the new challenges of traffic noise and the urban environment. Now under the guidance of Ajahn Sumedho, he saw the nature of his suffering in London and his cravings for a peaceful and quiet life back in the forest hermitages of Thailand. He experienced the new suffering and saw the cause of the new suffering. Even with his insight into the cause of his suffering, due to power of habit and karma, Ven. Ajahn Viradhammo said he needed constant reminders of the mind and its attachment to cravings. He learned that the lifestyle of the Sangha provided a means of transcendence by developing compassion, patience, and service. He discovered that the monastic lifestyle was not the goal in itself but a means to the ultimate goal of transcendence.



Venerable Ajahn Viradhammo

It is no surprise then that just as Ven. Viradhammo had got used to the London lifestyle, he was sent to New Zealand to work with an immigrant community from Asia. Again he experienced new challenges, but with the right consciousness, he was able to overcome them. When news that his elderly mother needed his help, he didn't hesitate to move back to Ottawa, where he looked after his mother for nine years before she passed away. He was able to use the experience of caring for his elderly mother and her subsequent death as a means of transcending attachment and craving.

Those present were not only moved by Ajahn Viradhammo's deeply personal account but also clearly captivated by his narrative style and skill. With a great sense of humor and ability to engage, he has definitely overcome the fear of public speaking and anxiety about teaching that he described himself as once having had. His talk tonight was warmly received by an appreciative audience.

THE EVANS-WENTZ LECTURE

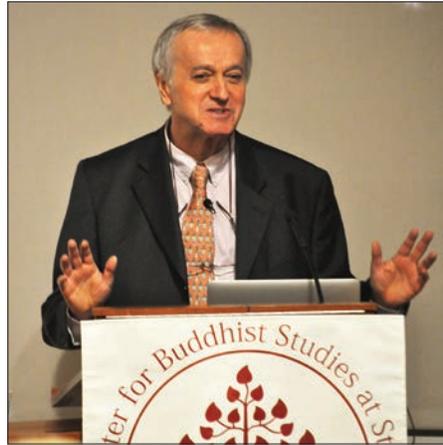
Giving the gods their due: Looking back at Japanese religion

Bernard Faure

Faure began his talk by pointing out that the study of Asian religion have thus far neglected one of its key themes, namely the role of gods and even more so the demons in Buddhism. The reasons for this trend are manifold: the lingering Durkheimian notion that religion is not primarily about gods, the belief that Buddhism is a religion without gods in spite of evidence to the contrary, and in Japan, the view after the Meiji Restoration that Buddhism and Shinto are the two main religions, with buddhas and bodhisattvas in the realm of Buddhism and gods or kami in the province of Shinto became widespread. Faure said that these concepts are at best simplistic and at worst misleading. Rather, he emphasizes the fact that Buddhism is replete with gods and demons and the spectrum of Japanese religion includes much more than the monolithic teachings of Buddhism and Shinto.

He made his point by examining a range of deities that do not fall into the neat categories of Buddhist or Shinto. He argued that far from being moot deities, these deities have always been at the living heart of Japanese religion. In Japanese religion, the official pantheon is made up of buddhas and bodhisattvas whereas the latent pantheon is made up of kojins or raging, wild deities, similar to the wrathful deities of Tibet. Their character ambivalence and resistance to characterization make them Janus-faced gods or demons whose nature often encompasses both good and evil. The term kojins designates a specific god and a host of elemental spirits or deities. These two designations, one a Buddhist kojins and second an ethnographic kojins, represent both sides of the same coin.

The Buddhist kojins initially symbolized the three poisons of greed, hatred and



Professor Bernard Faure (left),
Hōshi-wajō standing wooden statue, 11th
century, Japan (right)

ignorance. Originally kojins is a demon of obstacles, following people all the time like a shadow following the body. When kojins turned into a Buddhist protector, the deity came to signify the non-duality or identity of ignorance and ultimate reality, becoming the emblem of awakening. He not only controls the destiny of all beings but is the primordial Buddha, anterior to all time, and is the fundamentally existing Tathagata or Buddha, and as such the Tathagata kojins or nyorai kojins.

Kojins is represented in Japanese religion in three forms: as Sanbo kojins in its demonic form, as Tathagata kojins or nyorai kojins as a primordial Buddha, and as Kojima kojins, a variant form of the placenta kojins. The placenta kojins or Kojima kojins mediates between the two other forms. He is located in the cross world between esoteric Buddhism and local religion in the form of the cult of placenta.

In pre-modern Japan, the placenta is perceived as spiritual and divine and is seen as a double of the child. Furthermore it is also seen as a deity and is believed to protect the child in the womb, after birth, and even after death, from one rebirth to the next until final deliverance. The initial ambivalence toward the placenta became the moral ambivalence of the god kojins.

He appears as a peaceful Buddha to the virtuous and as a wrathful deity to the evil. Over time, the placenta deity became a duplicate of the child and became a double himself. His ambivalence was displayed iconographically as it came to be linked with twin spirits or kushojins born at the same time. These invisible spirits function as silent witnesses of our acts and are closer to ourselves than we ourselves are. They are not always benevolent but can harm us through their eagerness to report our misdeeds, and can also incite us to perform evil deeds. They become identified with the storehouse consciousness that keeps the imprint of all of our past acts.

Faure concluded that the twin figure of kojins and kushojins allow us to re-evaluate the polytheistic nature of Japanese deities before they became polarized into Buddhism and Shinto. As medieval gods found their way into Edo society, they fell into their place of Buddha and kami and they both lose their kojins characteristics, and became reformed with benign characteristics. He argues that modern Japanese forget that the popular Bodhisattva Jizo is a mask of the placenta deity once called kojins. The makeover of the wild, ambivalent deity into a friendly, benign deity in the modern era seems complete and his past forgotten.

The Death of Buddhist Icons and Their Changing Ontology in 10th and 12th Century China

Wei-Cheng Lin



Professor Wei-Cheng Lin

Wei-Cheng Lin gave a thought-provoking talk on the practice of burying broken statues in China during the 10th through 12 centuries. He asked why these statues were broken only to be carefully arranged and then buried inside pagoda crypts. He said that the place of their internment may provide us with clues.

An icon stands for presence of the divine it refers to and is considered to be “alive.” Thus when icons are broken, they become dead. But Lin argues that incomplete icons

do not die completely, but enter into an ontological shift when they are buried and become relics thereafter.

Lin referred to relics as remnants that remain after the body decays in early Buddhism. They are not signs of death but represent transformation of sacrality. When the Buddha dies, he has to be cremated in order for followers to obtain relics. The housing of bodily relics in stupas celebrates the breaking of the body as a sign of nirvana. Both cremation and enshrinement are required for attaining relics. Lin argued that the deliberate breaking or the brokenness of icons enacts the moment of the Buddha’s death. It recalls the breaking of the Buddha’s body to obtain relics. Thus broken icons are tied to the notion of broken body relics to be enshrined in pagoda crypts. The process is similar to tomb burial, illustrating the shifting ontology of breaking icons to resurrect or to make them come alive again. The crypt in the pagoda provides the framework for the transformation to take place as the broken icons are buried with other relics, e.g. bodily relics, dharma relics such as scriptures, and ritual objects.

It is the incompleteness or the imperfectness of these objects that defines relics. The bodily icons are commensurate to the canonical category of bodily and dharma relics. The incompleteness or brokenness is the way that the promised transformation will be completed. As bodily relics could be perceived as the true body and partial scriptures stand for the totality of teachings, these broken bodies could suggest the greater material presence of the divine in its bodily form. The incomplete form promises that sacred transformation could be achieved.

Putting the broken bodies into the crypt enhances the sacred center or the power of the pagoda. Concealing the broken icons inside empowers the icons. The breaking of the icon does not signify death, but rather only prompts an ontological shift of the icon. The pagoda crypt is a necessary disembodied space where broken bodily relics enter a process of changing ontology, from living icon into sacred objects or relics after death.

Mind pictures and manuscript paintings: Examples from twelfth century South Asia

Jinah Kim



Professor Jinah Kim

Kim showed how the pictorial and manuscriptological strategies we find in painted palm-leaf manuscripts relate to tantric vision practices and how they opened up a unique way to share visual knowledge. She emphasized the uniqueness of palm-leaf manuscripts as a medium for paintings. These painted manuscripts are distinct from paintings and murals for pictorial representations. She sees the painted manuscript as the kinetic experience of a three-dimensional mandala. For example, in flipping through these manuscripts, we can see an image right-side up and then on the opposite page, an image placed upside down to the running direction of the text. She said that

this is a deliberate placement of the images because when we flip the page as we would read them, the two images will come together as they are meant to be in union, uniting the *prajñā* and *upāya* (or *karuṇā*) of the couple.

Kim argued that manuscripts provide the perfect canvas for containing and circulating diverse visions and experiences. They contribute to shaping and sharing vast visual knowledge accumulated by the esoteric masters. Thus painted palm-leaf manuscripts represent a kinetic compilations of visions in portable versions, making multiple parts of objects circulable among a limited small group.

SHINNYO-EN VISITING PROFESSOR SEMINAR AND LECTURE

What Did It Mean to Be Ordained as a Tendai Monk in Medieval Japan?

by Yi Ding

Paul Groner, Professor Emeritus at University of Virginia, became the 2015–2016 Shinnyo-en Visiting Professor at Stanford and in his stay taught a graduate seminar during the Spring Quarter. In this seminar focused on precept-related topics, Groner masterfully steered the graduate students through a vast array of texts composed originally in India, China and Japan. The in-depth reading of doctrinal discussions about vinaya, precepts, and temple rules generated warm discussions in class and contributed to a much deeper understanding of Japanese monasticism on the students' part.

At the end of his academic sojourn, Groner delivered the Shinnyo-en Visiting Professor Lecture on Tendai medieval monasticism, attended by Shinnyo-en Foundation Board, Shinnyo-en Temple members and staff along with the rest of the audience. In this lecture titled “What Did It Mean to Be

Ordained as a Tendai Monk in Medieval Japan?” he first flashed forward and walked the audience through some of the contemporary Tendai rituals, from where the question about the historical formation of Tendai monastic discipline emerged. Groner then introduced Saichō's polemic position on the vinaya and the way his proposals stayed open to different ways of interpretation in medieval Japan. He then demonstrated the importance of the Brahma-Net Sutra for Tendai ordination and how the Tendai ordination ritual worked in medieval Japan. He explained the many exegetic devices that Annen, Ninkū, and other Tendai writers managed to come up with. As Tendai masters grappled with the discrepancy between vinaya and Bodhisattva precepts, various temple rules also came into existence. He then explained the Tendai-esoteric syncretic view of ordination that involves the idea that one can realize the Buddhahood



Professor Paul Groner

with this body. He concluded the lecture by pointing out the several remaining difficulties in the study of medieval monastic exegesis and practice.

HWEI TAI SEMINAR

Exploring new discoveries of Buddhist literature in Gāndhārī

Richard Salomon



Professor Richard Salomon leading the Hwei Tai Seminar

During the weekend of October 10-11, Richard Salomon from the University of Washington led the annual Hwei Tai Seminar. He focused on the study of two recently discovered Gāndhārī manuscripts: (1) the unpublished *Bahubuddhaka-sūtra scroll in the collection of the Library of Congress and (2) the fragment of the Prajñāpāramitā recently published by H. Falk and S. Karashima. He looked at the relationships of these texts with their various parallels in Sanskrit, Chinese, and Tibetan within the broader context of the significance of the rediscovery of Gandhāran Buddhist literature.

Syriac and Sogdian at Turfan: Questions of Audience and Transmission
by Yi Ding



Professor Erica C.D. Hunter (left),
Syriac script (right)



Dr. Erica C.D. Hunter, Head of Department and Senior Lecturer in Eastern Christianity in the Department for the Study of Religions at SOAS, presented a captivating lecture on the manuscripts found at the monastery site of Bulayiq on the outskirts of Turfan, which comprise about 500 fragments in Syriac or Sogdian.

The German Expedition conducted four campaigns at Turfan between 1902 and 1914 and brought back to Europe almost 40,000 fragments in 22 languages. Most of them are concerned with Buddhism, with a relatively small amount of Christian materials. There are about a thousand fragments written in Syriac script, covering three major languages, Syriac, Sogdian, and old Uighur. Bulayiq was only one of various sites visited by the expedition, but it was the site of the major discoveries and is still waiting to be excavated. There are also 97 fragments held at the Institute of Oriental Studies of the Russian Academy of Sciences in St. Petersburg. Now two catalogues, one on the Sogdian fragments

and the other on Syriac fragments, have been produced, which give a general idea about the content. A catalogue of the Uighur materials compiled by Peter Zieme is also scheduled to be published.

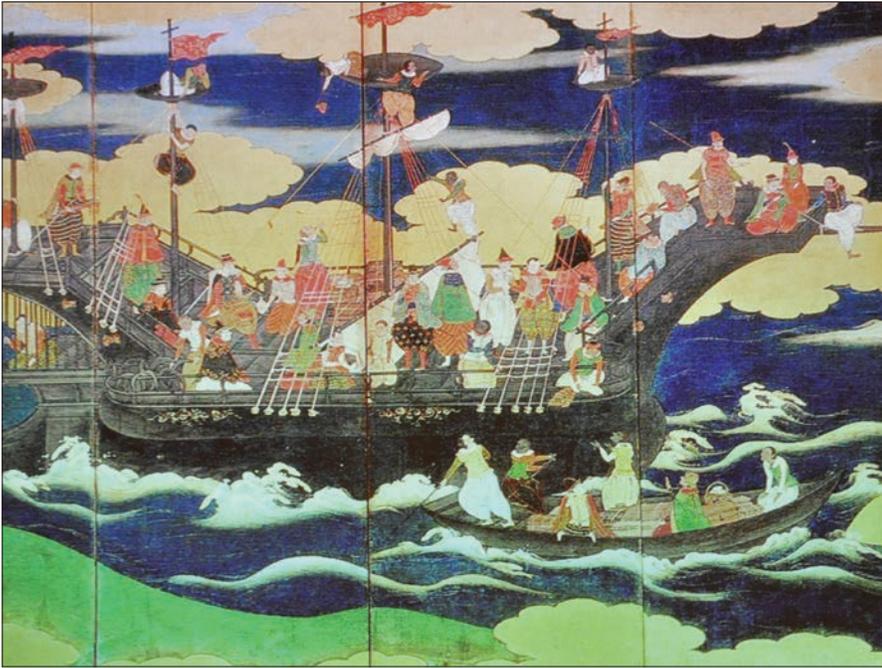
There is no colophon that has survived in the collection. Still, the fragments can be placed between the 9th and 13th centuries and collectively disclose to us the liturgy and life of the Christian followers in Turfan. Syriac was akin to Latin in the medieval period as a church language. The monks at the monastery probably were not Syriac speakers, instead, they used Sogdian as a vernacular language. Around the 9th century, Uighur began to eclipse Sogdian as the primary spoken language, with various genres written in this language, such as prayer books, stories, hagiography and economic documents. There is even a unique psalter written in Pahlavi with interesting paleographical features. The majority of the liturgical material comes from the Hudra (“cycle”), a principal liturgical text used in the Church

of the East. The Hudra documents, such as MIK III 45, shed critical light on the evolution of the East Syrian liturgy. Some of the materials excavated from Turfan were probably brought from Samarkand or even Mesopotamia to Central Asia. There is a paucity of hagiographies in comparison with the liturgies, nonetheless, they narrate stories about saints and martyrdom that show traces of a local cult of the saints. Some personal amulets in Syriac have been found, which were probably written by the monks and used by the laity. There are also several interesting pharmaceutical recipes extant. The fragment sir HT 99 verso contains an image of a decorated cross, which perhaps points to the influence of a particular Christian tradition.

After the talk, Dr. Hunter also answered several questions about the production and transmission of the manuscripts and the reading of several specific documents.

Cartography, Cosmology, and the Epistemology of Vision

by Daniel Tuzzeo



Professor Max Moerman (right),
Six-panel screen of "Arrival of Southern Barbarians",
Tōshōdai-ji Nara (left)

The 2015–2016 Ho Center for Buddhist Studies lecture series began with an exciting and well attended talk by Stanford Department of Religious Studies alum, Professor D. Max Moerman. Coinciding with his keynote address at the annual Stanford Graduate Student Conference, Professor Moerman returned to Stanford to discuss contesting cosmological paradigms in eighteenth- and nineteenth- century Japan.

With the encroachment of Western powers and accompanying technologies, Japanese Buddhists were suddenly faced with a challenge to the very foundation of their religious ontological framework and, quite literally, their worldview. This confrontation resulted in Buddhists defending the longstanding foundation of a Sumeru-structured universe in the face of Western science and technology.

Professor Moerman argued that the centrality of Indian cosmological systems in Japan was not a secondary or marginal concern with which Buddhists could easily dispense. Rather, traditional Buddhist cosmologies formed the “bedrock” of Buddhist philosophy. To this end, Buddhist seminaries in Japan developed departments devoted to the study of Buddhist cosmology, and Japanese Buddhists not only defended the superiority of the Buddhist understanding of the cosmos, but also denounced and criticized what they perceived as the falsehood of Western astronomy.

Perhaps most intriguing were images Professor Moerman used to demonstrate the significance of Buddhist cosmology in Japan and the desire to materialize the unseen. Two-dimensional maps and three-dimensional globes representing

a Sumeru-centered universe blended conventional cartographic methods with an ancient yet thriving religious imagination. Stating, “that which cannot be seen must be shown,” Professor Moerman addressed the crisis of representation facing Japanese Buddhists, to which some were eager to respond. Monks such as Hōtan and Zontō produced commercial maps promoting a blended empirical and imagined cartography which were popular enough to be reprinted and even pirated. Among these images was included Hōtan’s map dated to 1710 – the first Japanese world map – which comes from the David Rumsey Collection that was incorporated into Stanford’s map collection this year.

TIBETAN STUDIES INITIATIVE

The Case Against Tulkus: Ippolito Desideri's Refutation of Reincarnation Donald Lopez

Drawing on his current collaboration with eminent Tibetan translator Thubten Jinpa to produce a new English rendition of a treatise left behind by Jesuit missionary Ippolito Desideri (1684–1733), Don Lopez introduced Desideri's attempt to disprove Buddhism and establish the truth of Christianity. Arriving in Lhasa in 1716, Desideri set about acquiring a detailed knowledge of Tibetan Buddhism, studying for several years at the great Gelugpa monastery of Sera. When he was eventually forced to leave Tibet, displaced by Capuchin missionaries at the behest of the Pope, Desideri took with him a lengthy work, written in Tibetan, in which he set out to attack the doctrines of rebirth and emptiness, which he regarded as the twin foundations upon which the whole edifice of Tibetan Buddhism rested. This treatise remained unfinished, lacking the planned refutation of emptiness, but the section on rebirth offers a fascinating window on Desideri's training in Tibet and his encounter with Buddhism in that country.

Using a style of argumentation heavily indebted to Tibetan monastic models,

and not hesitating to draw on Buddhist sources to bolster his arguments against Buddhism, Desideri took particular aim at the institution of the tulku (sprul sku), and the beliefs and practices which clustered around the identification of incarnate lamas. While not denying the charisma of tulkus, or the veracity of their supposed memories of objects which they had owned or used in their previous life, Desideri ascribed these to demonic intervention (deeming them the work of the Devil), and calling attention to the problem posed by tulkus' remembering their former possessions (tea-cups and such) but forgetting entirely the religious education they had received. If rebirth was a fact, he also argued, why was it not known to occur anywhere in the world outside Tibet? In this last argument Desideri's claim was, as we now know, factually incorrect. Nevertheless, his unfinished treatise, after sitting forgotten and neglected in an archive in Rome for centuries, is at last giving us a fascinating and poignant view of one European's encounter with Buddhism in the 18th century, an encounter which seems to have had no effect on the Tibetans



Professor Donald Lopez Jr.

themselves, nor on emerging Western understandings of Buddhism at that time.

WINNER OF THE PRIZE FOR THE BEST UNDERGRADUATE PAPER ON BUDDHISM FOR THE 2015–16 ACADEMIC YEAR

Emergent Dharma: Buddhist Board Games, Past and Present Jackson Roach, Senior, class of 2017, Comparative Literature

Board games have a rich history within various Buddhist traditions, as pedagogical tools and as means of religious practice. Jackson Roach's paper provides a brief survey of Buddhist board games and their designers. In addition, it describes a new game designed by the author, which attempts to illuminate Buddhist principles via interaction design and emergent gameplay.



CALIFORNIA BUDDHIST STUDIES GRADUATE STUDENTS CONFERENCE (CBSGSC)

APRIL 23–24, 2016

Stanford University



Group photo of CBSGSC '16 attendees from University of California, Berkeley, Los Angeles, Santa Barbara, Santa Cruz and Riverside, the University of Southern California, Santa Clara University and Stanford University. #CBSGSC16

GRADUATE STUDENTS WORKSHOP

Why are there Mantras in Buddhism?

by Yi Ding



Professor Ronald Davidson

Ronald Davidson, Professor of Religious Studies at Fairfield University, gave a stimulating talk on the origin and development of mantras in Buddhism, titled “Why are there Mantras in Buddhism?” He first pointed out the prevalence of mantras in both Mahayana and Tantric traditions throughout history and across Buddhist Asia, and contrasted it with the lack of commensurate scholarly treatment for this important aspect of Buddhism. He then explained how mantras were constructed and modified in the Vedic tradition, and surveyed the practice of mantra-chanting in the ritual life of a Brahman. For example, if there is no mantra for a deity for a specific occasion, there are prescribed ways to construct a proper mantra. These patterns of construction later became absorbed into Buddhism. He then moved on to the *Sarvāstivāda vinaya* translated into Chinese, where the Buddha forbids the

use of mantras except those of protection or healing. It seems that Buddhists at a certain point saw mantras as problematic and potentially at variance with Buddhist monasticism. Thus it is not surprising that the earliest surviving Buddhist mantra, a Kharoṣṭhī fragment in the Bajaur collection, focuses on protection against poison. However, in the Gupta period, the ritual use of mantra-dhāraṇī rose to prominence. As mantras were deemed the currency of rituals, only the low castes performed rituals without mantras in India. As Brahmanic domestic rites evolved, lay dharma-preachers started to enlarge the repertoire of Buddhist rituals, more often than not laced with the use of various kinds of mantras. In this way, mantras gradually became associated with the cultivation of a lay clientele and Mahayana mantras were produced in a ritual-centered context in India.

Manuscript Culture and the Ritualist's Craft at Dunhuang

by Daniel Tuzzeo



Professor Paul Copp (left),
Ritual Manual from
Dunhuang, China (right)

Professor Paul Copp introduced the audience to a ritual manual from Dunhuang in the form of three handwritten scrolls and one printed booklet from the ninth to tenth centuries. This manual focused on the construction of talismanic seals and was intended for use in chanting primarily Buddhist scriptures and spells. Although these materials were discovered at the Mogao Grottoes in Dunhuang, like many other materials from Dunhuang they are held today at the Bibliothèque nationale de France in Paris. In these materials one finds various ritual programs, including an anthology of ritual sets, while still others appear to represent unfinished ritual texts with only titles and headings present. The ritual programs in these materials appear to be improvised and allow for further improvisation. Thus Professor Copp argued that ritual forms in these Dunhuang materials, and by extension in other ritual contexts in China and Central Asia, were utilized through “modular improvisation.”

In his HCBSS talk, rather than discussing the nature and symbolism of seals in Chinese Buddhism, which he addresses

elsewhere, Professor Copp instead focused on the manual in question itself, inquiring about the manuscripts’ and booklet’s role in a wider matrix of liturgical practices and the conventions of ritual practice and “liturgical composition” at Dunhuang, Central Asia, and China.

Professor Copp demonstrated that these materials allow us to see how rites for the chanting texts were composed, providing a window into the ritualist’s craft. Whereas the xylograph is essentially a finished product, the manuscripts shed light on the workings of the ritualist and his composition, including how he remade and repackaged liturgical forms and language. This apparent process of repackaging was significant, as Professor Copp argued that these materials demonstrate the ritualist engaging in a creative process, borrowing, appropriating, adapting, and refashioning existing ritual and liturgical modes and language into new ritual frames and forms. Again, this was likely not unique to Dunhuang ritual practices, and here Professor Copp recalled Zongmi’s reworking of Zhiyi’s ritual compositions.

Finally, Professor Copp argued that the Dunhuang materials shed light on an otherwise lost Buddhist culture, suggesting that these Chinese liturgies were not followed strictly and transmitted. While these liturgies follow a conventional structure, Professor Copp argued that they were likely not associated with eminent priests and lineages. These new ritual frames and programs were likely created at Dunhuang, which allowed new forms of “worship, healing, protection, and spiritual transformation,” and were compiled in order to make popular spells and scriptures more widely available. As we know, and as many materials from Dunhuang and Central Asia continue to reinforce, Buddhist and indeed ritual cultures are not monolithic. With further investigation of in situ materials from sites such as Dunhuang, we can not only better understand specific forms of Buddhism – whether it be the recitation of esoteric spells or the chanting of popular scriptures – but we also continue to develop a wider awareness of the many variant local forms of Buddhism and lived religious practice.

Moving Narratives – Transmission of Avadānas and Jātakas in Gandharan Texts and Images

by Grace Ramswick



Professor Jason Neelis (right),
Image: From Wladimir Zwalf, *A
Catalogue of Gandhāra Sculpture in
the British Museum* (London: British
Museum Press, 1996): cat. no. 136, p.
141–142 (left)

In April, Professor Neelis visited us to present his latest research on Buddhist narratives in Gandhāra. The specific types of narratives around which this project centers are known - depending on the content, medium, or geographic source - as jātakas, pūrvayogas or avadānas, and most often give accounts of past lives of Śākyamuni Buddha or other prominent disciples. In his talk, he guided us through two main bodies of material dating from roughly the 1st to the 3rd centuries CE: stone reliefs dispersed in various collections around the world, and summary versions of stories recorded in the Gāndhārī language on manuscripts now housed at the British Library.

Professor Neelis's ongoing research focuses on processes of "localization" or "emplacement" of such narratives in this region. In the first part of his lecture, he provided an overview of the specific jātika-type stories represented in stone reliefs at some of the most well-known Buddhist sites outside of Gandhāra, such as Bhārhut, Sāñcī, Kanaganahalli, Mathurā, and Ajañtā. Comparing the stories found at these sites with the fifteen or so distinct stories represented in reliefs from Gandhāra, he showed that certain

narratives were - as far as we can tell - especially prominent in, if not unique to, Gandhāran visual culture. He also supplemented this survey of sculpture by referencing the travel records of Chinese pilgrims such as Faxian (5th c.) and Xuanzang (7th c.), in which several of the fifteen different stories represented on reliefs from this region are mentioned. In these records, the pilgrims note traditions they encountered that linked particular Gandhāran locales with these different deeds of extreme giving performed by Śākyamuni in previous lives as a bodhisattva. Together, then, the sculptural evidence and the testimony of Chinese pilgrims point toward an ongoing "transplantation" or "domestication" of existing Buddhist narratives about Śākyamuni's past lives.

At the end of the lecture, Professor Neelis introduced a small handful of the dozens of summary stories found in the British Library Gāndhārī manuscripts. These narratives, unlike the more well-known jātakas found ubiquitously in sculpture, only sometimes detail Śākyamuni's actions in past lives, and are labeled either avadānas or pūrvayogas. The type of localization found in some of these

stories is similar to that documented by Faxian and Xuanzang, insofar as specific Gandhāran cities, Gandhāra as a whole, or nearby Kashmir are named as the settings for several of the tales. It differs, however, in another important respect: these are not existing narratives of Śākyamuni's past deeds that have been transferred to different locales. Instead, they are tales featuring seemingly (and sometimes verifiably) historical figures with Iranian or Indo-Iranian proper names, titles such as "satrap," or ethnicons such as "Śaka," all of which reflect the contemporary social milieu. Extending the agricultural analogy, Professor Neelis characterized these stories as "homegrown" as opposed to "transplanted."

Moving forward, he will explore several questions raised by this range of materials: Are the stories in the manuscripts in fact entirely "homegrown"? How can we better understand the differences between these "homegrown" stories and "transplantations" of well-known jātakas? And, more generally - why do local scribes (or the storytelling traditions reflected in their writings) seem to have "localized" narratives differently than the local producers and viewers of sculpture?

Adeana McNicholl



Adeana McNicholl, Bedse Caves, Pune (left), Ajanta's Cave 9 (right)

In the Summer of 2015, I was offered the opportunity to attend the intensive Sanskrit language program in Pune, India, through the American Institute of Indian Studies' Summer Language Program. About fifteen students from around the world gathered at Deccan College in Pune to study Sanskrit with eight excellent instructors. Our intensive schedule consisted of about four hours of class a day, Monday to Friday. We were divided into small groups for grammar, translation, reading, listening, speaking, and vocabulary classes. In addition to these classes, we also received two hours of personal tutoring every week. After classes ended, we ate lunch as a group, and left campus to find various cafes to work at until dinner. This typically involved about half an hour of attempts to use our broken Marathi and Hindi to haggle with the local rickshaw drivers. Our local coffee shop clerks knew all of us by name and favourite drink, and would sometimes sneak away from the counter to talk to us about Sanskrit. We learned as much from each other as we did from our instructors.

On the weekends, when we weren't sitting in coffee shops surrounded by stacks of Sanskrit dictionaries, grammar books, and

translation assignments, we visited local religious sites. We were fortunate that our visit coincided with Pandharpur Wari, a pilgrimage involving a 450 kilometer trek over fifteen to twenty days from Alandi (near Pune) to Pandarpur to pay respect to the god Vitthal. The entire city shut down in preparation for the procession through Pune. The main attraction in the procession were two palanquins carrying the relics of two Marathi saints.

In addition to Pandharpur Wari, we also visited a number of local religious sites. We often relied on tips from the locals to direct us to the best temples. My favourite temple was one that we stumbled upon almost accidentally. One day a rickshaw driver convinced us to allow him to drive us to "the best Jain temple in Pune." We were skeptical at first, since the outside and the foyer of this temple were under construction. However, our skepticism evaporated upon entering the main hall of the temple, which was elaborately carved out of marble. We received a private tour from the temple caretakers and met the marble engraver.

I think that I can safely speak for many of my fellow female scholar-travellers when

I remark that a significant part of the experience that we had involved learning how to be a woman doing research in a society whose gender norms may differ from our own. While, as a female scholar, I was fortunate to gain access to spaces that men are generally excluded from, I also experienced additional sets of difficulties while conducting research in gendered public spaces. It can be difficult to strike a balance between being honest to one's own understandings of gender and one's concern about safety as well as the desire to be respectful to the host country. These difficulties continue to be present when visiting archaeological sites and temple spaces. Regardless of these difficulties, I am grateful that I had the opportunity to visit a number of cave temples in Maharashtra. As someone who is interested in South Asian material culture and the interaction of various religious traditions at archaeological sites, these visits were particularly inspiring. During my ten week stay in India, I visited the caves at Ajanta, Ellora, Bhaja, and Bedse. I was grateful to be able to view first-hand sites that I had previously only read about and to observe the various ways that these sites continue to be used in the modern day.

My Journey to Lushan Sangyop Lee



Lushan bears different meanings to different people. For some, this is the mountain that captured Bai Juyi and Su Shi's poetic imagination with its ever-changing scenery. For others, Lushan is the place in the serenity of which Zhu Xi developed the ideas that were to change forever our reading of Confucian classics. A modernist would perhaps know the mountain better as the place where Pearl Buck allegedly penned her novel *The Good Earth*, or as the frequent political conference venue where a significant part of today's China was shaped. For me, Lushan is above anything else Huiyuan's mountain. It was here that the scholar-monk decided to seclude himself from the temporal world, and it was here that he wrote down most of his scholarly treatises whose arguments have fascinated me ever since I first read them in a class nine years ago. Last summer, I visited Lushan once again.

Huiyuan spent his last thirty or so years on Lushan in seclusion before passing away at the age of eighty-three in 414. His biography in the *Eminent Monks* reports that he was on his way to Luofu shan in the present-day Guangdong region when he first encountered Lushan, whereupon he noticed that the mountain was "pure and serene, suitable for resting the mind." Huiyong, an old colleague of Huiyuan, with whom he had earlier made a pact to practice the Buddhist path together on Luofu shan, had already settled on



Sangyop Lee, Tiger Hill, Suzhou (right),
View of West Lake, Guling, Lushan (left)

Lushan a few years before and urged Huiyuan to do the same. They first stayed together at Xilin si – a temple the local magistrate had donated to Huiyong – at the north-west foot of Lushan. Huiyuan soon gained his own followers in the region, and the succeeding local magistrate had a new temple built for him to the east of Xilin si, which then naturally became known as Donglin si. The *Eminent Monks* describes Donglin si's architecture and landscape with details such as its stone foundation and pine-tree pillars, a meditation grove that was often steeped in mist, and the grove's stone paths that were covered with moss. And it concludes that anyone who visited the temple thereupon experienced "their minds being purified and their dispositions becoming reverent." Donglin si quickly became a major center of Buddhism in China where Chinese and foreign monks and lay practitioners gathered to study and translate Buddhist texts, to meditate, and to experiment with new expressions of ascetic and devotional practices.

There is nothing much that survives from Huiyuan's time in present-day Donglin si. Nevertheless, I was still able to appreciate its landscape and location: Facing the misty towering peaks of Lushan, surrounded in all directions by gentle forested hills, the temple has a pleasant atmosphere of seclusion from the mundane world. Also, placed in-between the riverine city of Jiujiang – the regional capital in Huiyuan's time – and the proper mountain range of

Lushan, the temple would have functioned in pre-modern times as a gateway to the many numinous sites on this vast mountain, to the sites excursions to which Huiyuan describes in his more casual writings. The temple still attracts many Buddhists and continues to prosper. Their construction projects never seem to run out: between my previous visit five years ago and last summer, they had built a new main gate, a new stone pagoda surrounded by a lotus pond, and had begun building a giant lotus-shaped structure. At the south-west foot of Lushan, they had also constructed a giant Amithāba image, Donglin dafo. Meanwhile, summer retreat for lay practitioners was taking place in the temple. I particularly remember coming across a group of a Buddhist monk and lay practitioners sitting in a pavilion next to a mossy stone path in the bamboo grove behind the temple grounds. The lay practitioners were listening to the monk's lecture ardently, taking notes and recording it with their cellphones.

Beginning with the visits to Donglin si, Xilin si, and Zhu Xi's academy, I spent six days on Lushan. I stayed at the south foot of the mountain for three days, visiting Xianglu feng, now known as Xiu feng, whose beauty was a popular subject for classical poets, and three more days in Guling, the vacation town Westerners developed on the plateau of Lushan in the early twentieth century. Guling is now a bustling tourist town with restaurants, tea-houses, night markets, and a bookstore with an excellent collection of regional academic publications. Su Shi once wrote in a poem that it is impossible to know the true form of Lushan (*Lushan zhen mianmu*) because it appears completely differently when seen from a different perspective. I think this holds true for Lushan as a human – religious, historical, literary, political – space, and I always look forward to my next visit to the mountain for this very reason.

Michaela Mross



Michaela Mross is assistant professor of Religious Studies. Her research interests are Zen Buddhism, Buddhist rituals, sacred music, as well as manuscript and print culture in premodern Japan. She has written numerous articles on *kōshiki* 講式 (Buddhist ceremonials) and co-edited a special issue of the *Japanese*

Alex Kaloyanides



What a wonderful first year as a Ho Center postdoc! I cannot imagine a more ideal way to transition out of graduate school. The Ho Center has not only supported my writing and research this year, but it has also produced a stimulating series of events that has led me to think about new directions in the study of Buddhism.

The most enjoyable part of my time here so far has been getting to know the faculty, students, and staff dedicated to the study of Buddhism at Stanford. Irene Lin, Tatiana Deogirikar, and Stephanie Lee at the Ho Center have amazed me with their expertly organized (and deliciously catered) line-up of lectures, workshops, and conferences. Professors Paul Harrison and John Kieschnick have generously offered their

Journal of Religious Studies on *kōshiki* (2016). She has also just finished an article on prayer beads in Zen Buddhism, which showcases the esoteric and multivocal nature of Japanese Sōtō Zen. Currently, she is working on a book manuscript on the development of *kōshiki* and *shōmyō* 声明 (Buddhist chant) in the Sōtō Zen school.

Michaela Mross received an MA in Japanese Studies, Chinese Studies, and Musicology from the University of Hamburg in 2007. She then moved to Japan to study for nearly six years at Komazawa University and the Research Institute for Japanese Music Historiography of the Ueno Gakuen University in Tokyo. While studying in Japan, she also conducted archival studies, as well as in depth-field work at Sōtō Zen temples. At the same time, she was enrolled in the doctoral program in Japanese Studies at the Ludwig-Maximilians-University Munich, from where she received a PhD in 2014.

sage advice to help me think through my book manuscript and prepare for teaching here. And the graduate students have inspired me with their burgeoning research and creative engagement with current debates about theories and methods in the study of religion.

This first year at Stanford has also been exceptional for the time it has afforded me to revise my dissertation, “Baptizing Buddhists: The Nineteenth-Century American Missionary Encounter with Burmese Buddhism.” While working on reframing that project for a book manuscript, I have published two articles on related research: an essay on Buddhist voices in the antebellum American Protestant press entitled “America’s God and the World: Questioning the Protestant Consensus,” published last fall in *Church History*; and ““Show Us Your God’: Marilla Baker Ingalls and the Power of Religious Objects in Nineteenth-Century Burma,” an article published in *Religions* in June that investigates a famous dog statue and an adorned spirit tree to understand a uniquely popular Baptist mission in southern Burma.

This spring, I had the opportunity to bring some of my research questions into the classroom in “Buddhism and Modernity,” a seminar I

Before joining the faculty at Stanford University, Michaela Mross was Shinjo Ito Postdoctoral Fellow for Japanese Buddhism at the University of California, Berkeley, and from 2013 to 2014, she worked as a research associate (wissenschaftliche Mitarbeiterin) at the Georg-August-University Göttingen.

Michaela Mross received a Bachelor of Music from the Berklee College of Music in Boston, where she studied Jazz saxophone and Jazz composition. After graduating, she worked as a professional musician, first in Boston and later in Hamburg. In her research, she combines her musical background with Buddhist studies. As a result of her fieldwork, she also performed in rituals that she created together with the Zen clerics in Japan. During these rituals, monks sang traditional Buddhist chants taken from *kōshiki*, while she improvised on the saxophone.

taught to an excellent group of students from Stanford’s undergraduate programs and its School of Business. The seminar explored the ways Buddhists, Buddhist-sympathizers, and Buddhist detractors have presented the Asian tradition in the modern period. Our class studied material including Victorian poetry, Zen essays, Thai hagiographies, Beat literature, Buddhist-science dialogues, and mindfulness debates. The most rewarding part of the seminar was facilitating the research projects the students completed over the course of the quarter on topics such as S.N. Goenka and the Modern Vipassana Movement, the Buddhist ideas behind Bhutan’s environmental policy, the celebration of Southeast Asian water festivals in American diaspora communities, and mindfulness in corporate America.

I am very much looking forward to my second and final year as a postdoctoral scholar here at the Ho Center. It is sure to provide more opportunities for connecting with flourishing communities of scholars dedicated to the study of Buddhism as well as time for concentrating on my own contributions to the discipline.



I have been a Visiting Scholar at the Ho Center for Buddhist Studies at Stanford since September 2014 for two years. The affiliation has been one of the best experiences among the six visiting positions I have had in the last fourteen years around the world. My two years at the Ho Center is a fest of knowledge and friendship. I now have a colossal collection of inspiring lectures and conversations, and a lot of warm and fun memories to take away with me as I embark on the next stage of my career.

During my stay at the Ho Center, I was able to finish a collaborating book manuscript, *The Social Life of Goodness: Religious Philanthropy in Chinese Societies* (co-authored with Robert P. Weller and Keping Wu). This book focuses on the unique ways that religious groups have helped solve these problems of social well-being in Chinese societies through case studies based on ethnographic fieldwork in China, Malaysia, and Taiwan. Each site involves research across several religious traditions: Buddhism, Christianity, and the less institutionalized worship at local shrines. The book develops new analytical frameworks that contribute to the general understanding of religion and charity. Important findings include the new scale of “industrialized philanthropy,” the changing concept of social good and goodness, women’s leadership in philanthropy. The library collection at Stanford, especially that of the East Asia Library, is indispensable for my writing. John Kieschnick’s work provides crucial and

essential help on the concept of merit in Buddhism.

I have also made substantial progress on my research project, “Dying to Give: Buddhism and Cadaver Donations for Medical Purposes in Modern Taiwan.” Based on ethnographic and literature research, my research focuses on the making of a phenomenon called “a surge of cadavers” in the donation for medical school in Tzu Chi (Ciji) of contemporary Taiwan. My goal is to trace the modern practice of cadaver donation to the Buddhist tradition of the “gift of the body” in ancient Buddhism and bodily immolation in Chinese Buddhism, on the one hand, and, on the other hand, to bring in Buddhist perspectives to the discussion of contemporary bioethics, and the anthropology of death and dying.

My stay at the Ho Center began with sitting in John Kieschnick’s seminar on “Recent Contributions to Buddhist Studies.” As an anthropologist, John’s seminar opened the door for me to the amazing world of Buddhist studies. I benefitted tremendously from the questions and comments raised by the stellar audience at my lecture sponsored by the Ho Center. I thank Paul Harrison, Daniel Tuzzeo and Ding Yi for their stimulating questions, and Irene Lin for her eloquent summary of my lecture, which appeared in the last issue of LEKHA. I benefitted tremendously from participating in the Hwei-Tai Seminar at the Ho Center led by Stephen Teiser on the liturgies for healing (患文) discovered at Dunhuang for my understanding of Buddhism and illness. My analytical framework further came in shape from teaching the course on “The Buddhist Body in East Asia: Charisma, Gender, and the Gift of the Body” at the Department of Anthropology at Stanford in Autumn 2015.

It’s the people that make the Ho Center a house of brilliant minds and delightful

vibes. I thank everyone at Building 70 for making my stay rewarding and fun. John Kieschnick has been an amazingly supportive sponsor and a great guidance for Buddhist studies. Paul Harrison provides a great model of teaching and Buddhist scholarship. Irene Lin is a godsend, the most efficient and professional staff member, and a specialist in Japanese Buddhism. She makes everything happen, timely and efficiently, in addition to being pleasant and warm, with a great sense of humor. Tatiana Deogirikar makes sure every thing is delivered – from a new website to lecture organizations, and to catering – artistically and superbly, garnished with a soft touch from her smile. I feel very lucky to have met and conversed with the graduate students at the Ho Center. I could see how they will put Buddhist studies in the United States and the world in perspective.

The Visiting Scholarship at the Center allows me to connect with faculty and staff in the greater Stanford community. I am grateful for the opportunity and want to take this chance to thank the Department of Anthropology and the Center for the East Asian Studies for their support for my course, and the Center for Democracy, Development, and the Rule of Law for their support for my presentation at the Taiwan Study Project. In particular, I am indebted to Tanya Luhrmann, Ellen Christensen, Kaila Jimenez, and Emily Bishop at Anthropology, Gordon Chang, John Groschwitz and Kristin Boyd at the Center for East Asian Studies, and Larry Diamond and Kharis Templeman at the Taiwan Project. Jidong Yang, the head of the East Asia Library, generously facilitates my research with a great environment and competent staff support.

Thank you, the Ho Center for Buddhist Studies at Stanford. I’ll hope to see everyone very soon!

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