



LEKHA

NEWSLETTER • ISSUE 6 • 2017

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



IN THIS ISSUE:

CO-DIRECTOR'S MESSAGE

HIGHLIGHTS

- 4 **THERAVADA BUDDHISM LECTURE SERIES**
Alicia Turner, York University, Canada
- 5 **TT & WF CHAO DISTINGUISHED BUDDHIST PRACTITIONER LECTURES**
Venerable Ajahn Sona, Abbot of Birken Forest Monastery, Canada
- 6 **TIBETAN STUDIES INITIATIVE**
Ester Bianchi, University of Perugia, Italy
- 7 **THE EVANS-WENTZ LECTURE**
Lothar Ledderose, Heidelberg University, Germany
- 8 **SILK ROAD LECTURES**
Imre Galambos, University of Cambridge, England
- 9 **HWEI TAI SEMINAR**
Wendi Adamek, University of Calgary, Canada
- 10 **SHINNYO-EN VISITING PROFESSOR LECTURE**
Jens-Uwe Hartmann, University of Munich, Germany
- 11 **INDIAN BUDDHISM LECTURES**
Jowita Kramer, University of Munich, Germany
Alexandra Kaloyanides, the Ho Center's 2015-17 Postdoctoral Fellow,
Stanford University
Christian Wedemeyer, University of Chicago Divinity School
- 14 **SPECIAL TOPIC SERIES**
Max Moerman, Barnard College and Columbia University
Alexandra Kaloyanides, the Ho Center's 2015-17 Postdoctoral Fellow,
Stanford University
- 15 **CHINESE BUDDHISM LECTURES**
Charles Orzech, University of Glasgow, Scotland, UK
- 16 **GRADUATE STUDENTS WORKSHOP**
Wendi Adamek, University of Calgary, Canada
Marcus Bingenheimer, Temple University
Stuart Young, Bucknell University
- 17 **SPECIAL EVENT**
Buddhist Studies Symposium 2016
- 18 **HCBSS NEWS**
Eric Huntington, the Ho Center's 2017-19 Postdoctoral Fellow
- ## STUDENT REFLECTIONS
- 18 **FIRST YEAR REFLECTIONS**
Simona Lazzarini, Ph.D. Candidate, Department of Religious Studies,
Stanford University
- 19 **STUDENT NEWS**
Best Undergraduate Paper in Buddhist Studies for 2016-17
Qualifying Exams
Student Publications

Lekha Newsletter
Issue 6 • 2017

Lekha is a Sanskrit word for
letter or writing

Editor and Writer:
Irene Lin

Designer:
Tatiana Deogirikar

Contributors:
Yi Ding
John Kieschnick
Simona Lazzarini
Grace Ramswick
Daniel Tuzzo

Cover image:
photographer:
Christian Luczanits
*"The mahasiddha cave of Konchokling
in Upper Mustang, Nepal"*

CO-DIRECTOR'S MESSAGE

This has been the year of qualifying exams. The stars aligned in such a way that over the past few weeks six PhD students in Buddhist Studies have taken their qualifying exams. In designing the reading list for the Buddhism exam the challenge was to provide enough breadth to ensure that our students graduate with a grounding in the major areas of Buddhist Studies, but short enough that they have time to read carefully and to complete the reading in a couple of quarters. We settled on a model in which students choose from a short list of 10 primary sources and 10 secondary sources, covering different geographical regions and different approaches to the material. The timed, written portion of the exam is followed by a three-hour oral exam. Now that this round of exams is over, we are waiting on student response to the latest iteration of the reading list, but personally I've found the 18 hours of intense discussion on the state of Buddhist Studies in the space of a few weeks fascinating—one of the highlights of my year.

In the next few months we will say goodbye to our first Buddhist Studies postdoc and hello to our next. Alexandra Kaloyanides, our postdoc for the past two years, will be taking up a position as Assistant Professor at the University of North Carolina, Charlotte. Alex has been a major presence at the Center, and set the bar high for subsequent postdocs, whether for her intellectual contributions to discussions at talks, her own presentations, her work with

graduate students or, more generally, for her collegiality. Our new postdoctoral fellow, Eric Huntington, comes to us after a stint as the Cotsen Postdoctoral Fellow in the Society of Fellows in the Liberal Arts at Princeton. Eric, who works on Buddhist depictions of the cosmos, starts in September and will teach a seminar this year entitled "Creating the Universe: Buddhist Science, Ritual and Art" in the Winter quarter.

Paul Harrison was on leave this year but, in a series of bodhisattva-like acts of sacrifice, emerged from his study to help us out time and again, not only with the eighteen hours of qualifying exams, but also with planning for the 20th anniversary and all manner of administrative crises. He did vacate his office long enough for this year's Shinnyo-en Visiting Professor, Jens-Uwe Hartmann of the University of Munich to make full use of it during his time with us this year. I had come to expect Uwe's erudition, but his relentless good cheer in the midst of the gloomiest California winter in memory took me by surprise.

Lectures at the Center included 16 speakers this year, including our yearly workshop organized by a graduate student. This year it was a workshop called "text is territory" which focused on the relationship between text and space in Chinese Buddhism. (Next year, Adeana McNicholl is organizing a workshop on Buddhist theories of embodiment).



John Kieschnick, Co-Director of HCBSS

We (and by "we" I mean, mostly, Irene, Tatiana and Stephanie) have been hard at work preparing for the 20th anniversary of the Ho Center, which we will celebrate with workshops, presentations, exhibitions and other surprises. It's too early to confirm all of the participants and activities, but keep an eye on the Center's website as November 2017 approaches.

A handwritten signature of John Kieschnick.

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

TERAVADA BUDDHISM LECTURE SERIES

The Most Democratic Monastery: Religious Difference and Indifference in Colonial Burma

Alicia Turner (by Grace Ramswick)



Alicia Turner, York University, Canada

Alicia Turner, Associate Professor at York University and author of *Saving Buddhism: The Impermanence of Religion in Colonial Burma*, visited us in October 2016 to share some of her recent work on constructions and deconstructions of religious difference in colonial Burma.

As a prelude to the main portion of her talk, Professor Turner spoke briefly about twentieth and twenty-first century shifts in the country's political climate, including the more recent success of the National League for Democracy in the 2015 general election and ongoing concerns about religious tolerance in the country. Referencing theoretical scholarship on notions of the "secular" and the "religious," she drew our attention to the manner in which both modern nation-states and Buddhist institutions of various sorts rely for their functioning on the reproduction and management of ethnic and religious boundaries.

Yet in her subsequent turn to case studies from the mid-late nineteenth century, Turner's goal was not simply to provide examples of overt colonial constructions of difference. Instead, she focused on two "pockets of pluralist interaction" in



order to explore how such institutionally reinforced religious and ethnic boundaries were in some circumstances ignored or transgressed.

Her first example brought us to Thayettaw, a monastic complex of Rangoon known as "the most democratic of monasteries." She began by detailing how its growth from a single monastery into a large complex is historically tied to the British reconstruction of the city along a grid in the 1850s. The new grid infrastructure, through which colonial order, hierarchy, and bounded multiculturalism were inscribed into the surroundings, left only a limited number of plots for religious groups of various sorts. These plots went largely to groups serving ethnic enclaves, and as a result, most indigenous Burmese Buddhist monasteries relocated to Thayettaw at the city's northern fringe. Here, Turner claimed, a different type of urban space began to take shape—one which, by virtue of its "maze-like" layout and inclusiveness, has over the years been physically and socially at odds with its more regimented environs and certain sensibilities of the Buddhist elite.

Turning to her second example, Turner acquainted us with two reform-minded monks who were active in the smaller southern port city of Tavoy. The first of these monks was Indra Wunsa, who navigated complex relationships with royal, colonial, and monastic authorities in such a way that he was granted a fair amount of latitude in pursuing reforms in his community. She then introduced us to Indra Wunsa's successor, Thila Thera, who went on to found the Tavoy's comparatively multi-ethnic (and Chinese-sponsored) Zeyawadi Monastery.

In her closing comments, she invited us to join her in reflecting further on these case studies, and expressed the hope that her work will generate new questions about contingent modes of tolerance and inclusion in colonial and post-colonial Burma.

TT & WF CHAO DISTINGUISHED BUDDHIST PRACTITIONER LECTURE

My 40 Years of Buddhism in the West

Venerable Ajahn Sona



Venerable Ajahn Sona, Abbot of Birken Forest Monastery, Canada

Venerable Ajahn Sona started his talk by reflecting on his first encounter with Buddhism. Attracted to philosophy at university and interested in the meaning of life, he became a classical musician and joined the music faculty at the University of Toronto. His first encounter with Buddhism was through a Tibetan Buddhist tulku giving instructions in meditation. After practicing with the tulku, Ajahn Sona also got interested in Sōn (Korean Chan) Buddhism and practiced meditation with the Sōn community. He was struck by how comfortable he felt with these Buddhist communities and also how they felt like his real family. It was as if he were an amnesia victim, waking up to something familiar.

As he continued his meditation practice, Ajahn Sona said his mind became calmer. He realized that meditation, in particular breath meditation, became an antidote to excessive discursive activity. In the modern world, he said, we stress critical or discursive thinking that is both symbolic



and abstract. We no longer experience reality directly. He emphasized that our emotional afflictions and intellectual excess could be controlled or shut down through meditation. If we are able to experience life in a new and different way, we can overcome the disappointment and disenchantment of the world as experienced through the sensory world of sight, hearing, taste, smell, and touch.

Subsequently Ajahn Sona retreated to a shack in British Columbia and lived there for some years as a hermit, continuing his meditation practice on his own. When he learned of the establishment of the first forest monastery in North America (Bhavana Society in West Virginia), he went there and later became the first Buddhist monk to be ordained at the monastery. Thereafter he traveled to Thailand where he practiced with the Venerable Ajahn Chah for two years. Upon his return to Canada, he started a number of monasteries in the forest tradition.

Ajahn Sona teaches two main practices. First, through breath meditation, practitioners become conscious, aware, and not harassed by linear or discursive thinking. Second, through the practice of metta or loving kindness, practitioners become less critical or harsh toward themselves and others. Ajahn Sona states that the most important therapy in Western societies should be to get outside of one's discursive activity. Therefore one should use one's mind in a nondiscursive way and discover the meaning of life through the cultivation of loving kindness.

Over the last 25 years, Ajahn Sona has given 10,000 personal interviews and over 3,500 hours of dharma talk. Through the use of YouTube and streaming videos of his dharma talks, he has reached a broad audience. His tireless efforts in the teaching of the Buddha dharma have touched countless lives across seven continents.

TIBETAN STUDIES INITIATIVE

Teaching Tibetan Buddhism in Chinese on Behalf of Mañjuśrī

Ester Bianchi (by Yi Ding)



Ester Bianchi, University of Perugia, Italy

On February 21, Professor Ester Bianchi of University of Perugia presented a lecture on her recent anthropological inquiry into a Sino-Tibetan Buddhist community located in Southwest China, a topic dealing with many fascinating facets of contemporary Buddhism and the interpretative challenges it raises.

Bianchi began her talk with a brief introduction of the Larung gar Academy (Tib: gSer rta bla rung lnga rig nang bstan slob gling) in Sertar, a religious center for both Tibetan and ethnic Han followers. It was founded by a Nyingma lama Khempo Jigmé Phuntsok (Jigs med phun tshogs 'byung gnas; 1933–2004) in the 1980s, who somehow managed to obtain recognition for his academy from both the Panchen Lama and Chinese officials. Under his leadership, the academy gradually grew into one of the largest Buddhist compounds in the world in 2000, at its peak with 10,000 students attending. In the year 1987, Khempo Jigme Phuntsok, together with his disciples, made a pilgrimage to Mt. Wutai and hence established a connection between his community and Mañjuśrī Bodhisattva. Many Han Chinese then followed him



back to Sertar and soon Chinese devotees flocked to the site. Different kinds of religious texts have been composed and printed at Larung gar, and later distributed in China. They have helped to engage with Han practitioners located in different Buddhist centers in China, Taiwan and abroad.

The monks and nuns there have been active in touring cities, lecturing at universities, and keeping an online presence. When they were asked about the reasons why ethnic Han devotees prefer Larung gar over Chinese monasteries, Bianchi's informants cite the lack of outstanding Chinese masters, the relentless materialism and consumerism of Chinese society, the similarity between Chan and Nyingma teachings, and the doctrinal superiority of Tantric Buddhism. In terms of ritual calendar, there are four major annual ritual events that draw both Tibetan and Han devotees, the Vidhyādhara Assembly, the Vajrasattva Assembly, Assembly of Samantabhadra offerings, and Pure Land Assembly. The Vidhyādhara Assembly coincides with the Tibetan New Year Festival and is the largest in scale. On the ground, a

gradual approach of spiritual training is emphasized in teaching Han devotees, while very few Han devotees claim to have received any Tantric transmission. A notion of “ecumenical” (ris med) Buddhism, in this case led by Nyingma lamas, has been utilized and cultivated, which embraces not only all Tibetan Buddhist schools and movements, but also attempts to subsume the Chinese counterparts into the fold.

The success story of Larung gar can be explained by a combination of factors. Because of the absence of sectarian boundaries, the teachings appear to be more accommodating and accessible to the devotees. The classes delivered in Chinese and the integration of Chinese Buddhist texts and practices have helped Han devotees to acculturate to a unique, syncretic version of Buddhism. Media-savviness also contributes to the fast spread of their influence. To conclude, Bianchi proposed that we should understand the Larung gar phenomenon from an expanded “Rimé” perspective, which attempts to incorporate Chinese Buddhism into their curricula, liturgical services and other religious practices.

THE EVANS-WENTZ LECTURE

Writing on Mountains to Save the World

Lothar Ledderose (by Yi Ding)



Lothar Ledderose, Heidelberg University,
Germany

Lothar Ledderose, Senior Professor at Heidelberg University, delivered this year's Evans-Wentz lecture with a riveting topic. He began his lecture with two seemingly straightforward questions. For the Buddhist inscriptions in China, how did they shape space? And how did they shape time? With these two questions, he introduced to the audience his decades-long fieldwork in China and his many insights into a unique form of Buddhist art.

Buddhist inscriptions in China appear either on top of mountains or inside mountains. In the sixth century, Chinese Buddhist monks in present-day Shandong were engaged in engraving Buddha names and sūtra excerpts on cliffs under the open sky. This is a unique practice in China, and perhaps in the world. For example, on Mt. Culai 徒徕, there is an engraved excerpt from the *Saptasatikāprajñāpāramitā*, also known as the *Great Perfection of Wisdom Preached by Mañjuśrī*, where the Buddha describes the Perfection of Wisdom as his

true nature. On Mt. Tao, the phrase *bore boluomi* (*prajñāpāramitā*) was carved on the cliff together with two Buddha names, Avalokiteśvara Buddha, and Amitābha Buddha. The divine power of the inscriptions seemingly emanates over the land of Shandong. On Mt. Tie 鐵, the sūtra was carved onto a large slope in the shape of a stele, which allows modern scholars to produce unprecedented large-scale rubbings. This text states that Mt. Tie is aligned with Mt. Yi 嶧, and Mt. Tai 泰 to form an axis, while serving as a crossing point of two axes that anchors the Shandong peninsula. There are also texts hidden inside mountains, where the locations of the engraved sūtras have to obey the Chinese geomantic rules. There is another example of an engraved *Saptasatikāprajñāpāramitā* excerpt, shielded by stones and located inside Mt. Pingyin 平陰. It would be not impossible for someone to utilize this secluded site to meditate on the Buddha names and the sūtra.

The third way to save the world by writing on mountains is through "moving mountains." For instance, the Chinese monks have attempted to locate Vulture Peak (Grdhrakūṭa) in their native land. On Mt. Gang 岗, a vulture-shaped peak was identified as "Vulture Peak" and confirmed by its nearby cliff inscriptions. Just as the mythical mountain Potala (the abode of Avalokiteśvara located in South India) appears in Zhejiang, China and Tibet, Vulture Peak manifests itself in many places in China and Japan. In other cases, the shape of a mountain range is recognized as resembling the appearance of the Buddha. The mountains can represent the presence of the Buddha. There are three elements to this phenomenon: name, shape, and function. Name is attributed; the shape is

about the likeness. The function, in the case of Vulture Peak, is to translocate the Buddha to a nearer locale. In addition, the calligraphy on rocks creates an aesthetic space, a kind of "land art," that the original locale does not provide. It seems the idea of "land art" in China might have been shaped by non-Han steppe people from the North, who were familiar with art in the open.

Ledderose then moved to the topic of "time," which concerns itself with both the past and the future. In Sichuan, an unusual colossal reclining Buddha in Wofoyuan 臥佛院, Anyue, preserves for the viewer the moment of the Buddha's passing away (*mahāparinirvāna*). This rock-embedded Buddha, surrounded by a large amount of Buddhist caves and cliff inscriptions, transforms the whole area into a *mahāparinirvāna* scene. To re-enact the scene, there is an unfinished *Mahāparinirvāna Sūtra* engraved in Cave 59 and Cave 66. The architectural layout and the choice of location of these square caves reminds us of the cliff-burial complex in Sichuan. Housed on the cliffs, the deceased are not present in an everyday sense, but are still somewhat accessible. Furthermore, engraved texts can stave off the decline of the dharma and save the world from doom in the future. In the Yunjusi 雲居寺 area, Beijing, an entire canon was carved on stones in the 7th century. The storehouse for the slabs was built on a cliff and blocked by stone gates to protect the canon against future apocalypses. Unsurprisingly, the slabs indeed successfully weathered war, dynastic changes, and even the Cultural Revolution.

SILK ROAD LECTURES

The Lost Books of China: A View from Khara-khoto

Imre Galambos (by Yi Ding)



Imre Galambos, University of Cambridge, England

On May 4, Professor Imre Galambos brought to us a fascinating talk on the discovery of both the Tangut language and the history of a forgotten scripture. He demonstrated that the much-understudied Tangut manuscripts are a goldmine for the study of Buddhism, printing technology, Tibeto-Burmese languages, and Chinese religions.

Around 1907, Tsokto Badmazhapov (1879-1937), a Buryat in Russian service who could speak fluent Mongolian, found the sand-buried city of Khara-khoto (“Black City”; Ch. Heishuicheng) and sent back his exploratory report to Russia. However, he was not credited with the discovery by the Russian authorities. In 1908, the Russian explorer Pyotr K. Kozlov (1863-1935) acted on this piece of intelligence and officially discovered Khara-khoto. In Khara-khoto, within the ruins of a stupa outside the city, Kozlov uncovered over ten thousand manuscripts and printed books, mainly written in Tangut and Chinese. He shipped back the texts, together with a selection of the Buddhist objects he excavated, to be conserved in St. Petersburg. Nowadays, the textual artifacts are housed in the Institute of Oriental Manuscripts of the

Russian Academy of Sciences, and the art objects are conserved in the State Hermitage Museum in St. Petersburg. Although Kozlov took most of the intact texts and objects and left an almost leveled ground, M. Aurel Stein still managed to find another six thousand fragments of texts and many art objects in 1914. However, he did not find the many large statues deposited by Kozlov, whose whereabouts are still unknown. Compared with Kozlov’s sparse notes, the excavation report published in Stein’s *Innermost Asia* showcases Stein’s archeological gumption and extraordinary meticulousness.

The decipherment of Tangut, a Tibeto-Burman language used in Western Xia, has been largely based on the findings from Khara-khoto. Most of the credit goes to Nikolai Nevsky, who had been compiling a huge dictionary on the Tangut material before he was purged in 1937 in USSR. His dictionary was eventually published posthumously in the 1960s. Sir Gerard Clauson’s (1891-1974) *Skeleton Tangut Dictionary*, another important reference book, was published posthumously in 2016. Contrary to the common assumption that the Tangut language died out after the Mongol

annexation, the use of the script in fact lasted for almost five hundred years, from the early 11th century down to the early 16th century. The material from Khara-khoto consists mainly of Buddhist texts in terms of quantity, though there are also historiography, military treatises, medical works, lexicons, and translations of Confucian and Daoist classics. Most importantly for Sinologists, there are Tangut texts whose Chinese originals have since been lost or only known in much later versions.

The focus of Professor Galambos’s talk was on one of these lost books, *The Record of Confucius on the Apricot-wood Altar*. Both Russian scholars and Chinese scholars have published studies on this text, but they were misled by the Tangut title “The Altar Record on Confucius’ Conciliation.” The mystery is solved by finding the locus classicus—*Zhuangzi*. In the Taoist story in the *Zhuangzi*, Confucius was sitting on an apricot-wood altar when his disciples encountered a fisherman sage. In this case, the Tangut translator misread the original Chinese character xing 杏 (“apricot”) as he 和 (“conciliation”) and caused the confusion for modern scholars. This points to a Song apocryphal text, recorded in Chinese sources as the *Record of the Elderly Lord’s Mobile Altar*, due to yet another misreading of xìng 杏 as xíng 行. Though the story also shows up in Chan materials, this particular text persisted through history largely as a scripture for popular religion, prompting the idea that the three Chinese religions are in fact a united one. The book title can be found in the case files from the Qing court’s investigation of secret societies, and a woodblock edition was published in the Republic of China period as a “morality book” (*shanshu*).

HWEI TAI SEMINAR

Tathāgatagarbha-Related Materials in North China, 6th-7th Centuries

Wendi Adamek (by Daniel Tuzzeo)



Wendi Adamek, University of Calgary, Canada (center)

This year's Hwei Tai Seminar led by Wendi Adamek (Numata Chair in Buddhist Studies, Department of Religious Studies, University of Calgary) came on the heels of the second annual Ho Center for Buddhist Studies Graduate Student Workshop, and allowed students and faculty from Stanford and Berkeley to spend a weekend examining tathāgatagarbha-related materials in north China from the sixth to seventh centuries.

The first day was spent exploring canonical sutra passages from the *Nirvāṇa-sūtra*, elements of philosophy in the *Treatise on the Awakening of Faith in the Mahāyāna* (*Dasheng qixin lun* 大乘起信論), and a treatise on doctrinal classification from Jingying Huiyuan's 淨影慧遠 (523-592) *Chapters on the*

Meaning of the Mahāyāna (*Dasheng yizhang* 大乘義章). While referring at times to pre-existing English translations of the *Nirvāṇa-sūtra* and *Awakening of Faith* (e.g., Blum and Hakeda), Professor Adamek and the group often proposed suggestions for clearer or alternate renderings of many passages. Huiyuan is the attributed author of an important commentary on the *Awakening of Faith*, and his *Chapters on the Meaning of the Mahāyāna*, or a text by the same name, is curiously included among the list of Huixiu's works in the latter's epitaph, which participants spent the whole of the second day reading. The incredibly rich mortuary inscription from Baoshan in Henan provided the group with the opportunity to pore over the elegant and

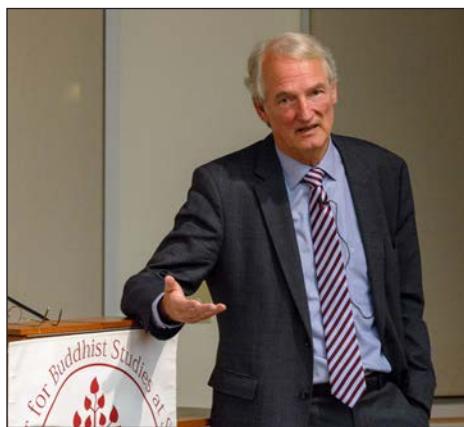
effusive eulogy, in the process getting to know Huixiu intimately, learning of his life, his work, and most clearly the impact he had on his disciples.

The participants of the 2017 Hwei Tai Seminar were very fortunate to work with Professor Adamek, who guided us through the sometimes terse and always fascinating materials. As another year comes to a close, and another seminar ended, we are reminded of the precious opportunity to share a weekend with one another reading together and learning from our friends and colleagues, and from the remnants of history passed down to us.

SHINNYO-EN VISITING PROFESSOR LECTURE

Monks and Merchants: How to Spread Buddhism

Jens-Uwe Hartmann (by Grace Ramswick)



Professor Jens-Uwe Hartmann concluded his stay at Stanford as the 2016–2017 Shinnyo-en Visiting Professor with a lecture titled “Monks and Merchants: How to Spread Buddhism.” His introductory remarks oriented us toward the centrality of patronage networks over the course of Buddhist history, from the time when the movement began to spread beyond the Ganges valley right up to the present-day efforts of international organizations such as Shinnyo-en. Many scholars, he acknowledged, have recognized and sought to better understand the symbiotic relationship between traders and monastics, especially but not exclusively in earlier Indic contexts. He expressed his intent to bring together the observations made in such work, and to present to us some of the more compelling pieces of material evidence for this symbiotic relationship.

The first piece to which Professor Hartmann introduced us was a carved stone medallion from a second–first century BCE railing at the famed central Indian stūpa site of Bharhut. Professor Hartmann guided us through the event depicted on this medallion, perhaps one of the most consequential for the early development of the monastic community: the wealthy merchant Anāthapiṇḍada’s purchase of Prince Jeta’s grove at



Jens-Uwe Hartmann, University of Munich, Germany

merchants who relied on the protection of the lokapālas, in turn, appear to have brought Buddhist practices and objects with them across vast distances, contributing in no small measure to its rapid spread.

Professor Hartmann then brought our attention to two fascinating archaeological finds which document the distant travels of Indian merchants stretching back to at least the first century CE. The first of these is an ivory statue of a female figure excavated at Pompeii but undoubtedly produced somewhere on the Indian subcontinent; the second is a line of ancient graffiti in the Brāhmī script which mentions the mahāmuni (Great Sage), discovered recently in a cave on the island of Socotra in the Arabian Sea. Such forms of evidence help to confirm what has long been supposed: that the common appearance of caravan leaders and merchant sailors in jātaka and avadāna stories can be taken as a fairly accurate reflection of Buddhism’s appeal to such groups.

Śrāvastī and subsequent donation of it to the sangha. We were shown how this image, which renders the transaction in considerable detail, testifies both to the early and unabashed acceptance of large donations and to the role that images likely played in encouraging such acts of giving.

We were then reminded of yet another famous episode from an even earlier moment in the Buddha’s life story—the offering of food not long after his awakening by the first lay followers, Trapuṣa and Bhallika. As is well known, these two earliest lay followers were also merchants. Yet the significance of this story to the topic at hand, Professor Hartmann explained, is not limited to the social identity of these earliest donors. The four lokapālas (deities of a lower heaven who guard the four cardinal directions), to whom long-distance travelers appealed for protection on their journeys, also play a key role in the narrative; it is they who each bring a bowl to the Buddha to use for the proper acceptance the merchants’ offering. The incorporation of these lokapālas into this and other sūtra narratives, and into the overall visual program of stūpa sites, demonstrates that the Buddhist community facilitated and invited continued propitiation of these gods while simultaneously subordinating them to the Buddha himself. The

In the last portion of the talk, Professor Hartmann drew on his expertise in Sanskrit Buddhist manuscripts discovered in Central Asia and Bāmyān (present-day Afghanistan) to highlight the existence of verse texts geared toward protecting the bodies and profits of merchants from both robbers and the elements through appeals to directional and constellational deities. In closing, he speculated briefly as to whether, in light of the apparently continuous dependence of monks and merchants upon one another across the centuries, the decline of Buddhism might not have been catalyzed by an ebb of traffic along certain long-distance trade routes.

INDIAN BUDDHISM LECTURES

Sthiramati and his Proofs of the Validity of the Mahāyāna

Jowita Kramer (by Grace Ramswick)

Jowita Kramer, Numata Visiting Professor at UC Berkeley for the 2016 fall semester, closed out the HCBSS's fall quarter programming with a lecture titled "Sthiramati and his Proofs of the Validity of the Mahāyāna." She introduced her ongoing work on the figure Sthiramati by first offering a few reflections on two more general topics germane to the study of Indian Buddhist philosophical literature. First, she noted that many modern scholars tend to perceive authors of commentarial texts to be less original than authors of independent treatises, and suggested that this misguided notion may at least partially account for the relative lack of interest in the works attributed to Sthiramati. She then went on to address how her research on Sthiramati does, to a certain extent, engage with the problem—one also confronted by scholars focused on other figures such as Nāgārjuna and Vasubandhu—of determining “authentic” authorship. In the case of Sthiramati, Kramer explained, the most basic question is that of whether a given text belongs to the corpus of the 6th century Yogācāra philosopher, Sthiramati, or was authored by one of several later figures who also adopted or were given this moniker; she argued that in attempts to resolve such issues, closely comparing words and phrases between texts is a more reliable method than searching more broadly for ideological similarities. She was, however, quick to acknowledge that definite answers to such questions about authorship will likely always remain out of reach. In light of this, she further clarified, she deems it more rewarding to investigate the contents of, and relationships between,

influential texts regardless of their authorship, than to indulge in too much speculation about individual personages who lived centuries apart or whose philosophical positions may or may not have changed over the course of their lifetime.

She then guided us through a survey of the seventeen works attributed by various sources to "Sthiramati." Immediately setting aside seven works that are widely believed to have been composed by a later, "Tantric," Sthiramati, she turned her focus on the remaining ten that have been the topic of greater uncertainty and dispute. In her discussion of these ten works, she began by drawing attention to the fact that identical sections of text may be found in two works most commonly and confidently included in the "original" (6th century) Sthiramati's corpus: the commentaries on Vasubandhu's *Pañcaskandhaka* and *Trimśikā*. Professor Kramer then introduced us to the remaining eight works (some of which were unavailable in Sanskrit until the recent discovery of a collection of manuscripts at the Potala palace in Tibet) and to some of the tentative determinations she and her Japanese colleagues have made about their authorship. At the end of this portion of her talk, she granted that there may have been as many as six individuals responsible for the seventeen "Sthiramati" works.

Following up on her previous suggestion that intertextual relationships can and should be explored even in the face of



Jowita Kramer, University of Munich, Germany

uncertain authorship, she then turned to a comparison of three commentarial works containing passages that enumerate the distinguishing features, and assert the superiority of, the Mahāyāna: the *Sūtrālaṃkāravṛttibhāṣya* and *Madhyantavibhāgaṭīkā* (both ascribed to Sthiramati) and the *Mahāyānasamgrahabhbāṣya* (ascribed to Vasubandhu). In this final portion of the lecture, Professor Kramer demonstrated that despite the unlikelihood, in her opinion, that these two commentaries attributed to Sthiramati were composed by the same author as the aforementioned commentaries on the *Pañcaskandhaka* and *Trimśikā*, they may still be treated as valuable windows into the development of Śrāvakayāna-Mahāyāna polemics.

INDIAN BUDDHISM LECTURES

"Objects of Conversion" and "Relics of Resistance"

Alexandra Kaloyanides (by Grace Ramswick)



Alexandra Kaloyanides, the Ho Center's 2015–2017 Postdoctoral Fellow, Stanford University

Dr. Alexandra Kaloyanides, the Ho Center's 2015–2017 Postdoctoral Fellow, gave a lecture in May that introduced us to some of the “objects of conversion” and “relics of resistance” treated in her current book project on American Baptist–Burmese interactions in nineteenth-century Burma. In this project, Dr. Kaloyanides places sacred objects at the center of analysis, and by drawing on the largely untapped resource of the archives of the American Baptist mission, seeks to focus greater attention on the activities of less socially and politically privileged Burmese and the American missionaries with whom they engaged. She walked us through her research on three types of materials—the object of the book, the spirit shrine, and the sacred portrait—and demonstrated how such

objects figured centrally in the dynamics of conversion, resistance to conversion, and the development of unusual (by Christian standards) modes of religious practice.

Her discussion of the object of the book began with a story about a group who had for twelve years worshipped a copy of the Christian Book of Common Prayer, only to be informed by missionary George Boardman that reverential treatment of the book itself was not the way to salvation. In another still more intriguing instance related in the journal of missionary Francis Mason, a divine book revered by a “sorcerer-like” figure and his community turned out to be a business card for the London law firm Wheelwright, Monk-house, Winter & Brooker. We learned that though missionaries were generally amused by and dismissive of such ritual activity, they too participated in bringing Christian texts into the fold of existing Burmese book practices. Adoniram Judson, for instance, had a Bible in six volumes produced with gold leaf according to “Burmese style,” to be presented as a gift to the king. This gift was, however, rejected—effectively denying the Bible any legitimacy it would have obtained had it been physically housed at the palace.

Dr. Kaloyanides then turned to consider two curious shrines that were created on the property of yet another missionary named Marilla Baker Ingalls. The first, a banyan tree where Burmese had long propitiated local spirits (*nat*), came to be decorated not only with Bible passages

and images, but also odd non-scriptural items such as a photo of Queen Victoria and a painkiller advertisement that presumably were also thought to hold some power. More interesting still, a cast-iron dog statue on her land that was set up with the intention of demonstrating the powerlessness of idols appears to have become one itself; despite Ingalls’ protestations, offerings were made and, at least as far as the Burmese were concerned, protection obtained from it. These shrines serve as examples of both conversion and resistance materialized, and as proof that indigenous modes of worship carried on among the converted.

For the final category of object, the sacred portrait, Dr. Kaloyanides directed our attention to the element of the exotic brought to Burmese Baptist spaces by the Anglo-American aesthetic of Warner Sallman’s Head of Christ and by the distinctly Western costuming of the missionaries Adoniram and Ann Judson in their portraiture. Dr. Kaloyanides suggested that we regard the persistence of the foreign aesthetic in these images not simply as lingering imperial influence, but as a means through which the largely non-Bamar Baptists are able to materially distinguish themselves from the ethnic (Bamar) and religious (Buddhist) majority.

We eagerly look forward to the publication of Dr. Kaloyanides’ book, and wish her all the best in her new position as Assistant Professor at the University of North Carolina, Charlotte!

INDIAN BUDDHISM LECTURES

Rhetorics of Solidarity in Mahāyāna Sūtra Literature, or ‘You’re So Vain, I Bet You Think This Sūtra is About You’ Christian Wedemeyer (by Yi Ding)

On December 1st, 2016, Professor Christian Wedemeyer delivered a thought-provoking talk on the narrative devices in Mahāyāna scriptures. He called for a critical re-reading of the Mahāyāna literature as literature and then demonstrates how to raise gainful questions through the lens of Indian aesthetic theories.

The talk started with a re-interpretation of what is the lure of Mahāyāna scriptures as a literary genre. From this perspective, the force of Mahāyāna rhetoric hinges on “capturing the imagination of the audience,” not on “convincing” the audience with doctrines and logic. In changing people’s behavior, doctrinal discourses, despite the predispositions of modern scholars, are proven to be far less effective than rhetoric in helping to bypass the deliberative faculties. One of the strategies of the Mahāyāna scriptures is the narrative incorporation of the audience, which invites the reader to imagine himself or herself as the hero or heroine in a romantic tale of Mahāyāna triumphs.

This appears to be the case in the deployment of prophecy (vyākaraṇa) in three renowned Mahāyāna sūtras, the Lotus, Golden Light (Suvarṇabhāṣa), and Pratyutpanna Samādhi. In the 9th Chapter of the Lotus, the Buddha tells a backstory (jātaka) of Ānanda, where Ānanda became a bodhisattva and received a prophecy of his eventual enlightenment. Upon hearing this, Ānanda and his fellow śrāvakas started to recall and confirm their respective backstories. By telling a backstory and then reaching to his audience, the Buddha breaks the “fourth wall” that is presumed

to exist between the frame story and the backstory. In the Golden Light, the Buddha tells a backstory where a king named Susambhava received the teaching of the Golden Light. Then the Buddha reveals to the audience that he himself is Susambhava. This narrative suggests and invites the reader to identify with the reader of the Golden Light in the narrative, who has already been prophesized in this Mahāyāna setting. Similarly, in the Pratyutpanna, the Buddha prophesies that after disappearing for a while the scripture Pratyutpanna itself will reappear in the world and whoever reads or hears it would be the reincarnation of one of the original 500 prophesied Licchavi youths. The narrative not only lends legitimacy to the text, but also speaks directly to the reader and invites him or her to identify as a hero in the text.

The rhetoric of Mahāyāna scriptures in many ways functions like a psychiatrist. It attempts to provide sufficient grounds for an auditor/reader to feel compelled to change internally and adopt new meta-narratives for himself or herself. As the jātaka and vyākaraṇa in Mahāyāna scriptures are deployed to provincialize the Mainstream scriptural narratives, the reader is informed of an older, more profound and much larger world of meaning, where they have already earned their prophecy. The employment of these Mahāyāna narratives or strategies is attested to in later Buddhist cultures. For instance, in the Tibetan historical work Testament of Ba, Śāntarakṣita is reported to have told Ba Selnang that innumerable lives ago the latter was the former’s main disciple. In this case, Śāntarakṣita invited Ba Selnang to adopt a new meta-narrative



Christian Wedemeyer, University of Chicago Divinity School

for himself and then work together for a common cause. Sometimes, even modern scholars are not immune to the rhetorical seductions. The late Conze confesses in his memoir that “my great knowledge of the Mahāyāna cannot be explained by what I could study in this life, but is based on my memory of what I learnt before,” as the *Vajracchedikā* asserts that whoever understands these teachings must have already belonged to the elect.

In conclusion, Wedemeyer points out that Bhaṭṭa Nāyaka’s work on aesthetics can help us better understand the effectiveness of these literary techniques. According to him, through literary skills, the horizon of the text is made to seem as if it were that of the viewer. In such a process called “actualization” (*bhāvanā*), the viewer is seduced into a willing suspension of disbelief and actually identifies with the characters of the work.

SPECIAL TOPIC SERIES

Faith in Paper: Printed Talismans and Inscribed Oaths in Premodern Japanese Religion

Max Moerman (by Yi Ding)



Max Moerman, Barnard College and Columbia University

In March, Professor Max Moerman revisited Stanford after two years and again delivered a captivating talk on his recent research on talismans and oaths in pre-modern Japan, by focusing on the printed talismans produced in the Kumano region.

Moerman first introduced the origins, artistic forms, and mass production of the paper seals called “precious seal of the Bull King” (*goōhōin*). The talismans have mostly been produced in the Three Grand Shrines of Kumano (Hongū Taisha, Hayatama Taisha, and Nachi Taisha), featuring raven-shaped patterns and abstract representation of Mt. Kumano. These *goōhōin* talismans,

so-called “protective tags” (*mamori fuda*), were originally designed to be attached to buildings to stave off disasters such as fire and burglary, or to be worn on the persons to protect one from misfortune such as disease or spirit-possession. From the late medieval period on, these talismans were inscribed, burned, and eventually swallowed by the faithful when oath-taking took place. The Kumano talismans became typically related to these practices.

According to historical records, the veracity of oaths (*shinmon* or *kishōmon*) was often set to be tested by trials. For example, an oath-taker would be challenged to plunge his hand into boiling water or grasp a red-hot iron to prove to the public that he had been keeping the oath. The oaths or pledges were normally inscribed on the reverse side of these talismans, which carried threats of divine retribution or legal consequences in relation with a host of deities. The punishments, if one failed to uphold one's oath, ranged from disease in the present life to rebirths in hells in an afterlife. Blood was utilized to ritually sign off these documents or even to write them out. A

list of deities, including Buddhist deities and local spirits, were conventionally to be invoked as witnesses and testifiers.

Moerman then revealed to the audience the drastic transformation of the Kumano talismans. Over time these talismans evolved from oath-making devices into the materials on which contracts were composed. Because of this, many talismans were kept and handed down as evidence of legal relations. The talisman-contracts were used by people of all classes in Japan. Warriors used them to swear their allegiance to their chiefs; merchants used them in banking activities; farmers pledged communal unity with them; prostitutes and brothels documented debt bondage on them. Literary materials indicate that some prostitutes even used it to profess their devotion to their clients.

At the end, Moerman pointed out that these materials, hitherto understudied, were indicative of the relationship between religious, legal, political, and economic practices, articulating religion within the social domain through the liturgical and material culture of oaths.

“Sanctifying Prison Grounds: The Visual Culture of Burma’s Let Ma Yoon”

Alex Kaloyanides (by Grace Ramswick)

Every year, the Religious Studies department hosts a series of lunchtime colloquia that allow members of our department to present and receive feedback on work in progress. As part of this year's series, the Ho Center's own Postdoctoral Fellow, Alexandra Kaloyanides, brought to the table a fascinating project which traces and interprets the nineteenth-century establishment of two American Baptist pilgrimage sites in Burma. In her paper and presentation, Dr. Kaloyanides demonstrated that these sites commemorating the lives

of the missionaries Ann and Adoniram Judson—Ann's lonely grave on the coast and the prison (Let Ma Yoon) where Adoniram was incarcerated—came to be known in the U.S. largely through widely circulated illustrations that, casting the Burmese actors as uncivilized and cruel, no doubt evoked strong sympathy for the couple among fellow Baptists. As she walked us through her analyses of these images, Dr. Kaloyanides also challenged us to think through—and perhaps reformulate—the long-standing analytical category of

“sacred space” as it relates to the initial creation and persistence of these particular pilgrimage destinations. In the spirited discussion that followed, the colloquium participants had many follow-up questions for Dr. Kaloyanides about her attention to both material culture and imagined space, about the blatantly Orientalist nature of the illustrations, and about her own recent travels to these and other sites in Burma with a Baptist pilgrimage group.

CHINESE BUDDHISM LECTURES

Liturgy, Icon, and Text in the Development of Esoteric Buddhism

Charles Orzech (by Yi Ding)

Professor Charles Orzech's talk centered on two interrelated questions concerning esoteric Buddhist ritual in China. First, can we describe the evolution of esoteric Buddhism as a trajectory beginning in the proto-tantric use of dhāraṇīs followed by a mature esoteric Buddhism and then followed by full-blown Tantra? Second, from a comparative point of view, what do esoteric liturgies do?

The first question revolves around how to understand the historical development of esoteric ritual technology. Visualization is commonly regarded as the hallmark of tantric Buddhist practice, and scholars have sought to trace the relationship between visualization and the use of images in the development of tantric or esoteric Buddhist ritual. To fulfill a linear progression, dhāraṇī scriptures are classified as ‘proto-tantric’ and marshaled to argue for the gradual interiorization of esoteric ritual. However, dhāraṇī scriptures would seem not necessarily the inevitable predecessors of esoteric ritual, since early dhāraṇī texts or visualization sūtras, such as the Consecration Sūtra, already contain some forms of the supposedly late “deity yoga.”

It would be more natural to assume that the ritual use of images and visualization are independent developments. If one discards the teleological assumptions, one would be able to locate the discontinuity

between dhāraṇīs, image visions, and visualization based on the bija-centered technology. From this perspective, the defining features of “tantric” materials are mainly two ritual innovations: the deployment of mūdrās (seals) in coordination with mantras and the systematic visualization of a lunar disc and “seed syllables” (bija). While the former was introduced to China during the Liang dynasty (502-557), the latter arrived around the eighth century, starting with Bodhiruci’s translation of the *Amoghapāśadhāraṇī* in 707. Concerning the second question, one should understand eighth-century and later forms of esoteric ritual as a technology for generating public subjectivity, that is to say, the interactional presence of a divine community. In this regard, scholars on late antiquity, such as David Brakke, James J. A. Smith, and Derek Krueger, have much insight to offer. Liturgy, performed together with an imagined or real congregation, produces a liturgical subject that is primarily constructed in a social performance. The *abhiṣeka* (consecration) seems to be a liturgical machine for ritually producing Buddhas, who are communal and stereotypical, rather than unique and fully autonomous. The structure of many early Tantric manuals is based on a formulaic sequence of hosting divine guests, where the worshiper prepares and purifies himself, confesses sins and dedicates merit,



Charles Orzech, University of Glasgow

contemplates the image of the deities, and evokes them to be present or reside. Each step of the sequence is accompanied with sophisticated and coordinated mudrās and mantras. As a result, the ideal subject is generated in the performance of worship and the object of worship is embodied in communal ritual. This guest-host liturgical structure forms the core of numerous eighth-century manuals and one can argue that early tantric liturgies represent exactly the ritual construction of subjects.

GRADUATE STUDENTS WORKSHOP

Text is Territory: Imagining, Crafting, and Transforming Time and Space in Buddhist China

Wendi Adamek, Marcus Bingenheimer, Stuart Young (by Daniel Tuzzeo)



*Wendi Adamek,
University of Calgary, Canada*

The intersecting domains of time and space in Chinese Buddhist texts are important areas of research, and their focus is an emerging trend in Chinese Buddhist studies. Complicating J. Z. Smith's assertion, borrowing from earlier twentieth century refrains, that map is not territory, the second annual Ho Center for Buddhist Studies Graduate Student Workshop held on April 20, 2017, brought together three scholars focused on Chinese Buddhists' historical uses of texts to imagine, craft, and transform time and space.

This year's workshop organizer, Daniel Tuzzeo (Ph.D. Candidate, Department of Religious Studies), whose dissertation research treats the intersection of Indic and indigenous Chinese frameworks of cosmological space and time in medieval Chinese Buddhism, invited three scholars to introduce their recently published and ongoing work to the Stanford Department of Religious Studies: Professors Wendi Adamek (Numata Chair in Buddhist Studies, Department of Religious Studies, University of Calgary), Marcus Bingenheimer (Assistant Professor, Department of Religion, Temple University), and Stuart Young (Associate Professor, Department of Religious Studies, Bucknell University). Each of these scholars' talks centered around Chinese Buddhists' efforts to use space



*Marcus Bingenheimer,
Temple University*

to concretize and materialize Buddhism physically, narratively, and kinetically, and to transform naturally occurring space and time into signified place and history: from giving concrete form to Buddhist philosophy and Chinese Buddhism itself through landscapes and caves in the fifth to sixth centuries, to connecting India and China through the material of silk in the Tang dynasty, to narratively mapping the religious landscape of the nineteenth century and visualizing those maps in the twenty-first century.

Wendi Adamek discussed inscriptions and visual depictions in sixth- and seventh-century mortuary niches at Baoshan in Henan. These niches were crafted by an eschatological Buddhist community who refashioned existing devotional imagery and language to inscribe the memory of its deceased members on the local site, in the process transforming landscape, the past, community relations, and Buddhist practice. This material would be further explored in the following weekend's Hwei Tai Seminar led by Professor Adamek.

Marcus Bingenheimer introduced two pilgrimage route books written by Buddhists in the nineteenth century, which map out the state of not only Buddhist but also Daoist, Confucian, literary, historic, and scenic sites across China. Professor Bingenheimer engaged in his own



*Stuart Young,
Bucknell University*

twenty-first century process of mapping by visualizing these routes through GIS visualizations.

Stuart Young used the focus of his first book, *Conceiving the Indian Buddhist Patriarchs in China*—focused on Chinese hagiographies of the Indian Mahāyāna figures, Aśvaghoṣa, Nāgārjuna, and Āryadeva, in order to explore Chinese Buddhists' negotiations of their distant relationship with India, and their location and role in Buddhist time, space, and culture, and soteriology—to lay the foundation for his new work focused on silk and sericulture in Buddhist China.

The second annual Ho Center for Buddhist Studies Graduate Student Workshop encouraged students, faculty, and visiting scholars to appreciate further the relationship between text, territory, and time. In the illustrations demonstrated by this year's guests, cliffs became sites of memorial; geographic, temporal, and cultural distances were bridged through mythical histories; and GIS technology visualized the movements of monks who crafted their own itinerary maps of Buddhist China. The workshop was a great success and the workshop series promises to be a valuable resource for graduate students to learn directly from scholars in their field.

SPECIAL EVENT

Buddhist Studies Symposium

Stanford Humanities Center, September 8- 9, 2016



In early September, the American Council of Learned Societies, in collaboration with The Robert H. N. Ho Family Foundation, held the “Buddhist Studies Symposium” at Stanford. The two-day symposium celebrated the fellows of The Robert H. N. Ho Family Foundation Program in Buddhist Studies for the 2015-16 academic year. The fellows presented their research and received valuable feedback and advice from senior scholars and their peers in the field.

HCBSS NEWS

Postdoctoral Fellowship 2017-2019

Eric Huntington, the Ho Center for Buddhist Studies Postdoctoral Fellow 2017-19



Eric Huntington studies the relationships between visual art, ritual, and philosophy in the Buddhist traditions of Tibet, Nepal, and India. His current book project uses interdisciplinary methods to explore diverse portrayals of the cosmos in Himalayan Buddhism, revealing cosmology as a foundational framework for many aspects of religious life. Huntington also works on other topics involving religion and material culture, including the role of illustration in Buddhist manuscripts and the nature of embodiment in consecrated images. Prior to joining the Stanford community, he served as a Cotsen Postdoctoral Fellow at Princeton University and received a PhD from the University of Chicago.

FIRST YEAR REFLECTIONS

Simona Lazzerini

I started my PhD in Religious Studies at Stanford after having spent three years in China and having earned two masters in the United States. My interest in Buddhist Studies and Chinese religions began at an early age and grew stronger while I was pursuing my undergraduate degree in Italy. Living in East Asia has also been fundamental for me, not only to improve my Chinese, but also to make me realize I truly wanted to become a scholar of East Asian Buddhism. I am very grateful to be part of the department of Religious Studies and the Ho Center for Buddhist Studies at Stanford, as this academic environment is helping me grow as a scholar, define my goals, broaden my knowledge, and work with excellent faculty members and fellow graduate students. This first year went by really fast and it feels like it was only yesterday when I first met my advisor, Professor Kieschnick, and stepped foot in the Ho Center and gazed at its amazing library. Over the course of this year I had a great time learning Japanese, working on pre-modern Chinese Buddhist texts, and defining my research interests. I have taken exciting classes in both my department and the East Asian Languages and Cultures department; the many lectures and events organized by the Ho Center allowed me to meet famous scholars and become familiar with a wide range of Buddhist studies-related topics. I have also been working with amazing faculty members, PhD students, post-doctoral fellows and, last but not least, I got to know and become friends with the Ho Center staff.

During my first year at Stanford I also published a book review for the AAR's website, "Reading Religion," on Robert Campany's latest book *A Garden of Marvels. Tales of Wonder from Early Medieval China*. My colleagues and professors supported and helped me, especially Professor Kieschnick and Dr. Alexandra Kaloyanides, and I am very grateful for it. This experience showed me that Stanford and the Ho Center are the right environments for me, as both the faculty and my fellow graduate students support my projects and are always generous with assistance and advice. My research is currently focused on Buddhist demonology and female deities: I hope to write my dissertation on the worship of Hārītī (Guizimu 鬼子母) in China and Japan, how her cult was brought to East Asia, and its process of domestication. I am also interested in violence in religious practices and gender issues, including women's health and infantile diseases. This summer I am planning to visit the British Museum and work with several Chinese, Japanese, and Gandharan paintings and sculptures of Hārītī, as visual culture is an essential part of my research. As for my dissertation, during this year I have worked on several Chinese scriptures centered on Hārītī, and I have investigated selected issues related to demonology, such as revenge, motherhood and childbirth traumas, and demons' conversions.

I am very pleased and satisfied with my first year in the PhD program at Stanford and, although it is tiring and demanding,



Simona Lazzerini, Ph.D. Candidate,
Department of Religious Studies, Stanford
University

I believe this is the right place for me. The faculty, students, and the staff at the Ho Center have supported me since my first day and warmly welcomed me into this new "family." I look forward to the following years: I am excited to meet new visiting professors and graduate students, broaden my knowledge of Buddhist studies and East Asian religions, improve my language skills, refine my research interests, and do field work in China and Japan. I am also very excited to be part of the celebrations and splendid events for the Ho Center's 20th year anniversary. In the next years I hope to grow as a scholar and as a person, and find my way in the exciting and sometimes frightening world of academia.

STUDENT NEWS

Best Undergraduate Paper in Buddhist Studies for 2016-17



The Ho Center for Buddhist Studies selects one undergraduate paper in Buddhist Studies to receive the award for the best paper in Buddhist Studies every year. The recipient of this award for the 2016-17 academic year is George Husley. George said he grew up in the Bay Area and had the privilege of being exposed to Buddhism by his 9th grade history teacher, and his interest in it continued to the end of high school and into college. He came into Stanford as a physics major and still primarily studies physics, but his passion for Buddhism has become a meditation habit and prompted him to take Prof. Mross's class, which he loved. George hopes to pursue more Buddhist Studies during the rest of his Stanford career.

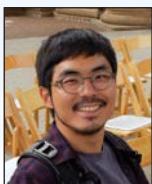
Here is the abstract of George's paper entitled, "Bankei Zen: Exemplifying the Anomaly." Master Bankei Yotaku is one of the classic iconoclastic teachers of Zen Buddhism, with an unconventional and anti-establishment style. His style, which may at first glance seem strange and out of place in Zen, is actually quite typical for the historical context in which he taught. Bankei as a character actually has a lot in common with other popular preachers of his time. In this paper, George discusses how Bankei's uniqueness is created by his historical situation; how his uniqueness is really quite normal.



Yi Ding

Adeana
McNicholl

Daniel Tuzzeo



Sangyop Lee
Grace
Ramswick



Simon Wiles

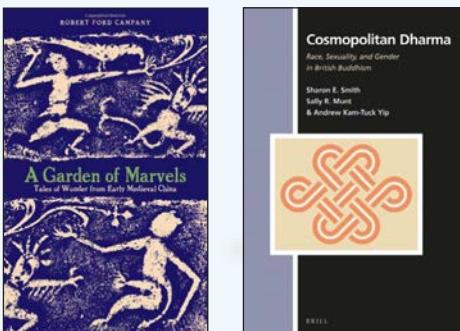
Qualifying Exams

We would like to congratulate 6 of our doctoral students for successfully completing their qualifying exams: *Yi Ding, Sangyop Lee, Adeana McNicholl, Grace Ramswick, Daniel Tuzzeo, Simon Wiles.*

Well done! The qualifying exam is in two parts: two 5-hour written exams followed by a 3-hour oral exam. Adeana was especially courageous in selecting an additional area of specialization so she had three 5-hour written exams followed by the oral exam. They now move onto the dissertation writing stage.

Student Publications

Our graduate students Simona Lazzerini and Adeana McNicholl completed book reviews in *Reading Religion (RR)* (book review website published by the American Academy of Religion (AAR)). Simona Lazzerini reviewed *A Garden of Marvels: Tales of Wonder from Early Medieval China* by Robert Ford Campany. Adeana McNicholl reviewed *Cosmopolitan Dharma: Race, Sexuality, and Gender in British Buddhism* by Sally R. Munt, Andrew Kam-Tuck Yip, and Sharon Smith.





HCBSS Staff:

John Kieschnick
Co-Director

Paul Harrison
Co-Director
(on sabbatical 2016-17)

Irene Lin
Executive Director

Tatiana Deogirikar
Program Specialist

Stephanie Lee
Finance Associate

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

450 Serra Mall
Bldg. 70-71E, Main Quad
Stanford, CA 94305-2165

buddhiststudies@stanford.edu

