



**UKABS 2023 CONFERENCE**



**NEGOTIATING BOUNDARIES**

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



 University of St Andrews | FOUNDED 1413 |  UKABS  
UK Association for Buddhist Studies |  St Andrews  
Encyclopaedia of Theology



Photo: Anandajoti Bhikkhu

**PROGRAMME  
&  
ABSTRACTS**

## Welcome to UKABS Conference 2023

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

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

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

### **UKABS 2023 Conference Organising Committee:**

Dr Elizabeth Harris (University of Birmingham), President of UKABS

Dr Nick Swann (University of South Wales), UKABS Secretary

Prof. Alice Collett (University of St Andrews)

Dr Nic Newton (University of St Andrews)



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## OVERVIEW

## DAY 1 – WEDNESDAY 21<sup>ST</sup> JUNE

*11:00 – 18:00* Registration Open  
St Salvator's Quadrangle

*15:00* UKABS Welcome Address  
Venue: School 3, St Salvator's Quadrangle

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

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

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

## DAY 2 – THURSDAY 22<sup>ND</sup> JUNE

	<b>School 3 Lecture Theatre</b>	<b>School 5 Lecture Theatre</b>	<b>Irvine Lecture Theatre</b>	<b>Forbes Laboratory</b>
	St Salvator's Quadrangle	St Salvator's Quadrangle	Irvine Building	Irvine Building
09:00 – 10:00	Session 1 Hidden in Plain Sight: Porous Boundaries in Theravada Buddhism, Part 1	Engaged Buddhism / Buddhism and Violence 1	Buddhist Practice, Part 1	Boundaries in Japanese Buddhism
10:00 – 10:15	Comfort & Transit Break			
10:15 – 11:15	Session 2 Hidden in Plain Sight: Porous Boundaries in Theravada Buddhism, Part 2	Engaged Buddhism / Buddhism and Violence 2	Buddhist Practice, Part 2	Roundtable: Lives of the Buddha
11:15 – 12:00	Morning Break and Monastic Lunch			
12:00 – 13:00	Session 3 Buddhist, Buddhized, and un-Buddhist Narrative, Part 1	UKABS Post-Graduate Panel, Part 1	Body, Mind, and Health, Part 1	Buddhism and Politics
13:00 – 14:30	Main Lunch			
14:30 – 15:30	Session 4 Buddhist, Buddhized, and un-Buddhist Narrative, Part 2	UKABS Post-Graduate Panel, Part 2	Body, Mind, and Health, Part 2	
15:30 – 15:45	Comfort & Transit Break			
15:45 – 16:45	Session 5 KEYNOTE: Natalie Gummer			
17:00 – 18:00	Session 6 UKABS Annual General Meeting			
18:15 – 19:45	EUARE Gala Dinner			
20:00 - Late	Cham Performance by the Tashi Lhunpo Monks. Younger Hall. Ticketed Event.			

## DAY 3 – FRIDAY 23<sup>RD</sup> JUNE

	<b>School 3 Lecture Theatre</b>	<b>School 5 Lecture Theatre</b>	<b>Irvine Lecture Theatre</b>	<b>Forbes Laboratory</b>
	St Salvator's Quadrangle	St Salvator's Quadrangle	Irvine Building	Irvine Building
09:00 – 10:00	Session 1 Texts, Language, and Literature 1	Modern and Western Encounters, Part 1	Across Lineages, Schools, and Religions, Part 1	Teaching and Researching from an Interdisciplinary Perspective, Part 1
10:00 – 10:15	Comfort & Transit Break			
10:15 – 11:15	Session 2 Texts, Language, and Literature 2	Modern and Western Encounters, Part 2	Across Lineages, Schools, and Religions, Part 2	Teaching and Researching from an Interdisciplinary Perspective, Part 2
11:15 – 12:00	Morning Break and Monastic Lunch			
12:00 – 13:00	Session 3 Texts, Language, and Literature 3	Education, Part 1	Philosophy	Art, Image, Identity
13:00 – 14:30	Main Lunch			
14:30 – 15:30	Session 4 Texts, Language, and Literature 4	Education, Part 2	Sex, Sexuality, and Asceticism	
15:30 – 15:45	Comfort & Transit Break			
15:45 – 16:45	Session 5 KEYNOTE: Ute Hüskén			
16:45 – 17:00	Session 6 UKABS Closing Plenary			
18:00 – 19:00	Sand Maṇḍala Closing Ritual by the Tashi Lhunpo Monks. Old Union Diner / Procession to Seashore.			

## **PROGRAMME**

## DAY 1 – WEDNESDAY 21<sup>ST</sup> JUNE

**REGISTRATION OPEN**  
St Salvator's Quadrangle  
11.00 - 18.00

**15:00**

### School 3 Lecture Theatre

UKABS Welcome Address

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**15:30**

### School 3 Lecture Theatre

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

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Grove Harris and Guests

**17:00 – 18:00**

### Younger Hall

#### ***KEYNOTE***

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John Makransky (Boston College)

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

**19:00**

### The Byre Theatre

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

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## DAY 2 – THURSDAY 22<sup>ND</sup> JUNE

### 09:00 – 10:00 Session 1

#### School 3 Lecture Theatre

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

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Ven. Medagampitiye Wijithadhamma (University of Sri Jayawardhenapura)

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

Kate Crosby (University of Oxford)

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

#### School 6 Lecture Theatre

*Engaged Buddhism / Buddhism and Violence 1*

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Zoe Zielke (University of Oxford)

*Environmentally Engaged Buddhism: Negotiating the Boundaries 'Buddhist' and 'Activist'*

Donna L. Brown (University of Manitoba)

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

Peter Lehr (University of St Andrews)

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

#### Irvine Lecture Theatre

*Buddhist Practice, Part 1*

---

Graeme Nixon (University of Aberdeen)

*Lost Horizons? The Emergence and Contested Nature of Secular Mindfulness*

Kittipong Vongagsorn (Ludwig-Maximilian University of Munich)

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

#### Forbes Laboratory

*Boundaries in Japanese Buddhism*

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Rein Raud (Tallinn University)

*Religion or Philosophy? Reflections on Dōgen's Zen*

Haruka Saito (SOAS)

*Chanting as Translating Buddhist Thoughts in Medieval Japan*

Shodhin K. Geiman (Valparaiso University)

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

## 10:15 – 11:15 Session 2

### School 3 Lecture Theatre

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

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Pyi Phyo Kyaw (Shan State Buddhist University)

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

Olivia Porter (King's College)

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

### School 5 Lecture Theatre

*Engaged Buddhism / Buddhism and Violence 2*

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

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

Sam Pehrson (University of St Andrews)

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

Tim Stephens (University of the Arts London)

*Practice Research: Secular Buddhist Ethics in Art and Design Education*

## Irvine Lecture Theatre

*Buddhist Practice, Part 2*

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Heather Clydesdale (Santa Clara University)

*Buddhist Art as Experience and Transformation*

Catherine Hardie (Hong Kong Baptist University)

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

## Forbes Laboratory

*Roundtable: Lives of the Buddha*

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Alan Wagner (CRCAO, Paris) and Discussants

## 12:00 – 13:00 Session 3

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## School 3 Lecture Theatre

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

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Elizabeth Angowski (Earlham College)

*The Seductions of Sacrifice: On Reading the Jātakas for Pleasure*

Alexis Bader-Brown (Harvard University)

*Pleasure and Outrage: Learning to be Buddhist from Un/Anti-Buddhist Buddhist Tales*

## School 5 Lecture Theatre

*UKABS Post-Graduate Panel, Part 1*

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Shengnan Dong (SOAS)

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

Edward A S Ross (University of Reading)

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

## Irvine Lecture Theatre

*Body, Mind, and Health, Part 1*

---

Sara Swenson (Dartmouth College)

*Ayurvedic Mindfulness: Buddhist Health and Healing in Vietnam*

Tsering Dorji (Independent)

*Hathayogic Mudrā and Body Postures in Tibetan Buddhist Amṛtasiddhi Text*

## Forbes Laboratory

*Buddhism and Politics: Historical Questions and Emerging Approaches*

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Paul Fuller (University of Edinburgh)

Nan Ouyang, (Ghent University)

Saul Tobias (California State University, Fullerton)

## 14:30 – 15:30 Session 4

## School 3 Lecture Theatre

*Buddhist, Buddhicized, and un-Buddhist Narrative, Part 2*

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Natasha Mikles (Texas State University)

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

Erin Burke (University of Virginia)

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

## School 5 Lecture Theatre

*UKABS Post-Graduate Panel, Part 2*

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Peter Cherry (SOAS)

*Regression and the 'Diamond Like-samādhi'*

Bernat Font (University of Bristol)  
*The Hedonic Training of Early Buddhism*

### **Irvine Lecture Theatre**

*Body, Mind, and Health, Part 2*

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Yashpal Jogdand (Indian Institute of Technology Delhi)  
*Touching the Untouchable: Psychology, Buddhism, and the Caste Question*

James E. Willis, III (University of Indianapolis)  
*Buddhist Śūnyatā, the Biopharma Development of Psychedelics, and Homo Economicus: Ego Dissolution in an Age of Re-Ordering*

**15:45 – 17:00**

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### **School 3 Lecture Theatre**

#### ***KEYNOTE***

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Natalie Gummer (Beloit College)  
*Reading in a Ritual Cosmos, and Other Lessons on Blurring Boundaries from Buddhist Literature*

**20:00 – 22:00**

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### **Younger Hall**

*Event*

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Cham Performance by the Tashi Lhunpo Monks

## DAY 3 – FRIDAY 23<sup>RD</sup> JUNE

### 09:00 – 10:00 Session 1

#### School 3 Lecture Theatre

##### *Texts, Language, and Literature 1*

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Beier Wang (Leipzig University)

*A Buddhist View of Conceptualization and Ideology*

Sajal Barua (The University of Hong Kong)

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

Stefan Karpik (Independent)

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

#### School 5 Lecture Theatre

##### *Modern and Western Encounters, Part 1*

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Elizabeth J. Harris (University of Birmingham)

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

Jiang Wu (University of Arizona)

*The British Acceptance of the East Asian Buddhist Canon in the Nineteenth Century*

#### Irvine Lecture Theatre

##### *Across Lineages, Schools, and Religions, Part 1*

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Alexander Soucy (Saint Mary's University)

*The Twentieth Century Sectarianisation of Buddhism in Vietnam*

Rachel Pang (Davidson College)

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

## Forbes Laboratory

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

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Irina Zhambaldorzhieva (The Courtauld Institute of Art)

Pearl Jackson-Payen (The Courtauld Institute of Art)

Sujatha Meegama (The Courtauld Institute of Art)

## 10:15 – 11:15 Session 2

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### School 3 Lecture Theatre

*Texts, Language, and Literature 2*

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Yixiu JIANG (Leiden University)

*Who Can Become a Saint? Disputing the Boundaries between Common People and Saints in Early Mahāyāna*

M. K. Edwards Leese (Independent)

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

Tiantian Cai (University of Wisconsin-Madison)

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

### School 5 Lecture Theatre

*Modern and Western Encounters, Part 2*

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Isabel Jacobs (SOAS)

*Alexandre Kojève and Buddhism*

Maria Sharapan (University of Jyväskylä)

Constructing a Flexible Tibetan Buddhism

### Irvine Lecture Theatre

Harsha Gautam (The University of Texas at Austin)

*Gods without Worshippers: Religious Boundary-Making in Mathura*

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

*Crossing Holocaust Boundaries: Zen Peacemakers in Auschwitz-Birkenau*

### **Forbes Laboratory**

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

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Aiken Unni (The Courtauld Institute of Art)

Liutong Yi (The Courtauld Institute of Art)

Lori Wong (The Courtauld Institute of Art)

## **12:00 – 13:00 Session 3**

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### **School 3 Lecture Theatre**

*Texts, Language, and Literature 3*

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Martin A. Mills (University of Aberdeen)

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

Ding Kehan (University of Edinburgh)

*Tea Samādhi: Material Display and Imagination of Chan Buddhism*

Hélène de Brux (LMU Munich / EPHE Paris)

*The Inner and Outer Bounds of Buddhist Conversion*

### **School 5 Lecture Theatre**

*Education, Part 1*

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Monica Sanford (Harvard Divinity School)

*The Students Are Ready, Will the Teachers Please Appear*

Nicholas S. Hobhouse (University of Hong Kong)

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

## **Irvine Lecture Theatre**

*Philosophy*

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Dobdon Maksarov (SOAS)

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

Taryn Sue (University of Chicago)

*Exploring the Boundaries of Buddhist Logic: Challenges and Opportunities*

Allan Furic (University of Edinburgh)

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

## **Forbes Laboratory**

*Art, Image, Identity*

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Ziyi Shao (SOAS)

*Iconography in Communications: The Six Stupas in Fanhualou*

Run Gu (University of Tübingen)

*A Cross-boundary Product of Buddhism, Confucianism, and Daoism: The Belief in Guan Gong in Mongolian Buddhist Prints of the Qing dynasty*

Jill Sudbury (Independent)

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

**14:30 – 15:30 Session 4**

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## **School 3 Lecture Theatre**

*Texts, Language, and Literature 4*

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Jesse Pruitt (University of Toronto)

*The Redescription of Buddhism by Modern Tamil Śaivas*

Gregory Adam Scott (University of Manchester)

*Marking Boundaries in the Buddhist Publishing World of Republican China*

Xiaoqiang Meng (Leiden University)

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

## **School 5 Lecture Theatre**

*Education, Part 2*

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Nick Swann (University of South Wales)

*Play and Pedagogy in Buddhist Studies*

Rusha Jin (University of Edinburgh)

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

## **Irvine Lecture Theatre**

*Sex, Sexuality, and Asceticism*

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

*Mononormativity, Compersion, and the Four Immeasurables*

Amnuaypond Kidpromma and James Taylor (Chiang Mai University)

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

Antony Fiorucci (Uppsala University)

*Demarcating the Middle in the Pali Vinaya*

**16:00 – 17:15**

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## **School 3 Lecture Theatre**

**KEYNOTE**

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Ute Hüsken (Heidelberg University)

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

**17:15**

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### **School 3 Lecture Theatre**

*UKABS Closing Plenary*

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**18:00 – 19:00**

### **Old Union Diner**

Sand Maṇḍala Closing Ritual

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Tashi Lhunpo Monks

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

## ABSTRACTS

DAY 1 – WEDNESDAY 21<sup>ST</sup> JUNE

### KEYNOTE

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

John Makransky (Boston College)

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

### INTRODUCTORY PANEL

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

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Grove Harris and Guests

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

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

## DAY 2 – THURSDAY 22<sup>ND</sup> JUNE

### KEYNOTE

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

##### **Literature**

Natalie Gummer (Beloit College)

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

### PANELS AND PRESENTERS

#### **Hidden in Plain Sight: Porous Boundaries in Theravada Buddhism**

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

Ven. Medagampitiye Wijithadhamma (University of Sri Jayawardhenapura)

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

Kate Crosby (University of Oxford)

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

Pyi Phyo Kyaw (Shan State Buddhist University)

## **Hidden in Plain Sight: How the ‘Heretical’ Zawti Tradition Preserved its Orthodox Practices**

Olivia Porter (King’s College)

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

## **Engaged Buddhism / Buddhism and Violence 1**

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### **Environmentally Engaged Buddhism: Negotiating the Boundaries ‘Buddhist’ and ‘Activist’**

Zoe Zielke (University of Oxford)

For many, the word “Buddhism” conjures up a variety of images and connotations: monks sitting on hilltops and meditating, mindfulness apps, cheerful Buddha caricatures, yoga. It is unlikely that these depictions suggest engagement with societal issues. And yet, this is precisely what many Buddhist communities and traditions are attempting to involve themselves with all around the world. Often referred to as “Engaged Buddhism”, this development in the Buddhist tradition refers to the application of Buddhist principles and practices to situations of social and environmental suffering, with engaged Buddhists tackling a wide array of issues from nuclear disarmament to women’s rights and the climate crisis. And yet, within many Buddhist communities there persists a critique of this development and a refusal to participate in anything which could be deemed ‘political’. Such commitments are often tied to the belief that the Buddha himself had no desire for social change and that worldly concerns were irrelevant to the ultimate goal of attaining enlightenment. Such disparate imaginaries have fueled debates of what a ‘Buddhist’ is and is not, what it means to be ‘engaged’, and to what extent, if any, the Buddha could be considered a social reformer.

This paper explores the boundaries negotiated by one environmentally engaged Buddhist group in the U.K. known as “Extinction Rebellion Buddhists” (XR Buddhists or XRB), a subgroup of the eco-activist organization “Extinction Rebellion” (XR). The group implements meditation not only as a religious practice but as a nonviolent, direct-action tactic, existing simultaneously as ‘Buddhist’ and ‘Activist’. Using participant observation and semi-structured interviewing, I interrogate the ways in which XRB members intertwine these two identities to formulate a religiosity which challenges the inward-looking, other-worldly tendencies often

associated with the Buddhist tradition. In doing so, XR Buddhists test the boundaries of religious insider and outsider, of Buddhist and non-Buddhist.

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

Donna L. Brown (University of Manitoba)

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

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

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

Peter Lehr (University of St Andrews)

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

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

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

### Lost Horizons? The Emergence and Contested Nature of Secular Mindfulness

Graeme Nixon (University of Aberdeen)

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

- What is the appeal of mindfulness at this time?
- To what extent can mindfulness be secular?
- How robust is the evidence for some of the claims for mindfulness?
- What are the criticisms of mindfulness?

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

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

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

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

Kittipong Vongagsorn (Ludwig-Maximilian University of Munich)

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

epithet in the mind of the practitioners. These epithets can bring out the entire Buddhology by means of etymologizing. His interpretation of the contemplation of the Buddha has continued throughout the history, as this paper will show the influence of Buddhaghosa's interpretation on modern-day meditation practice in Thailand.

### **Buddhist Art as Experience and Transformation**

Heather Clydesdale (Santa Clara University)

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

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

Catherine Hardie (Hong Kong Baptist University)

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

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

oriented religious lives. In a religious context that presents Han Chinese monastic practitioners of Tibetan Buddhism with both opportunities and challenges, it is suggested that many embrace ‘strategic hybridity’ as both a Dharmic ethos and survival tool.

## **Boundaries in Japanese Buddhism**

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### **Religion or Philosophy? Reflections on Dōgen’s Zen**

Rein Raud (Tallinn University)

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

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

I will argue that the opposition between religion and philosophy is actually irrelevant for Dōgen’s thought itself, but only reflects the Western obsession with classifying non-Western cultural phenomena according to its own schemes. As Dōgen’s texts are meaningful and rewarding for philosophical engagement, it would be intellectually counterproductive to deny the legitimacy of their philosophical interpretation because of our cultural prejudices.

### **Chanting as Translating Buddhist Thoughts in Medieval Japan**

Haruka Saito (SOAS)

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

is crucial to the transmission process, I would also like to explore the power of hearing sounds based on how Japanese monks considered Buddhist sounds by applying both textual and hermeneutical approaches.

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

Shodhin K. Geiman (Valparaiso University)

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

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

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

## **Engaged Buddhism / Buddhism and Violence 2**

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

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

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

that was absent the nation-state and prior to the European transformation of much of South and Southeast Asia and to paraphrase Philip Almond, in a time prior to the Anglo-European discovery and transformation of Buddhism) and the essential liberal-legal preoccupation of IHL, the treatment of civilians in a time of war.

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

Sam Pehrson (University of St Andrews),

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

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

### **Practice Research: Secular Buddhist Ethics in Art and Design Education**

Tim Stephens (University of the Arts London)

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

## **Roundtable: Lives of the Buddha**

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Alan Wagner (CRCAO, Paris) & Discussants

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

## **Buddhist, Buddhicized, and un-Buddhist Narrative**

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### **The Seductions of Sacrifice: On Reading the *Jātakas* for Pleasure**

Elizabeth Angowski (Earlham College)

### **Pleasure and Outrage: Learning to be Buddhist from Un/Anti-Buddhist Buddhist Tales**

Alexis Bader-Brown (Harvard University)

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

Natasha Mikles (Texas State University)

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

Erin Burke (University of Virginia)

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

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

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

Shengnan Dong (SOAS)

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

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

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

Edward A S Ross (University of Reading)

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

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

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

evidence to discuss the lived experience of travelling Buddhist missionaries in Central Asia in the 3rd century BCE.

### **Regression and the ‘Diamond Like-samādhi’**

Peter Cherry (SOAS)

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

### **The Hedonic Training of Early Buddhism**

Bernat Font (University of Bristol)

My dissertation explores the concept of ‘feeling’ (*vedanā*) in the early Buddhist texts, and it looks at how pleasant, unpleasant and neutral feelings actively contribute to awakening. In this paper I will focus on the soteriological value of spiritual pleasure in early Buddhism. To do this, I lean on the work of Ariel Glucklich, who suggests religions offer ‘patterns of hedonic training’, that is, cultivating one’s relationship to pleasure or enjoyment. To clarify religions’ complex relationship to pleasure, he borrows evolutionary theory’s classification of pleasure into novelty, mastery, and play. So, what kind of hedonic training does early Buddhism propose? Does this threefold classification reveal anything? What does progress look like from the angle of *vedanā*?

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

### **Ayurvedic Mindfulness: Buddhist Health and Healing in Vietnam**

Sara Swenson (Dartmouth College)

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

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

### **Haṭhayogic Mudrā and Body Postures in Tibetan Buddhist Amṛtasiddhi Text**

Tsering Dorji (Independent)

The shared religious practice of the Buddhists and the *Nāthas* has been the subject of enquiry for many decades. Recently, the 11th century Sanskrit *Amṛtasiddhi* text has revealed the early Buddhist involvement in certain yogic techniques which later became the core practice of the *Nāthas Haṭhayoga* tradition. The scholars have now placed this *Amṛtasiddhi* text in the category of early *haṭha* text. *Amṛtasiddhi* teaching (Tib. ‘*chi med grub pa*) had reached Tibet and thrived for centuries with their distinct *Amṛtasiddhi* lineage masters. Based on existing Tibetan *Amṛtasiddhi* texts, this article looks at how some of the physical-oriented yoga techniques which are widely known as the yoga of *haṭha* or *haṭhayoga* were practised in the Tibetan *Vajrayāna* Buddhist milieu. *Amṛtasiddhi* teaching might have spread to various Tibetan Buddhist traditions, but the Shangpa Kagyu tradition remained the stronghold of *Amṛtasiddhi* practice in Tibet. Based on *Amṛtasiddhi* texts from the Shangpa Kagyu teaching cycle, the article will demonstrate how haṭhayogic techniques like *Mahāmudrā*, *Mahābandha*, and *Mahāvedha* were practised in Tibetan *Amṛtasiddhi* yoga tradition, and how these techniques had been incorporated into *Vajrayāna*’s four *mudrā*-s. In supporting evidence of the interpenetration of Buddhist and *Nātha*’s practice, this article will argue that many yoga postures (Tib. *lus gnad*) in *Amṛtasiddhi* yoga manuals from the Tibetan Tengyur catalogue have a strong resemblance to the *āsana* of the *Haṭha Yoga*.

### **Touching the Untouchable: Psychology, Buddhism, and the Caste Question**

Yashpal Jogdand (Indian Institute of Technology Delhi)

Indian psychologists have made a rightful critique of mainstream Euro-American psychology for its culture blindness and gave call for indigenisation (Misra & Gergen, 1993). They have demanded decolonisation of

psychological sciences and developed what came to be called as “Indian” psychology (Chaudhary, Misra, Bansal, Valsiner, & Singh). However, the “Indian” psychology primarily focused on mainstream Hindu texts and thinkers and excluded other critical religious and philosophical traditions in India. Importantly, Buddhism was either ignored or appropriated as part of the mainstream Hindu tradition. This move allowed the Indian psychologists to devoid the conception of Buddhism from its emancipatory potential and maintain distance from addressing the caste question in contemporary Indian society. While the psychological thoughts of mainly mainstream Hindu texts and thinkers such as Patanjali, Gandhi, Aurobindo, and others have been studied and taught in Indian universities (Dalal & Misra, 2010), the anti-caste perspectives and radical thinkers such as B R Ambedkar have been relegated to non-scientific spheres. As a result, Psychology in India has failed to engage with B R Ambedkar and his conception of Buddhism (*Navayana*). This paper is an initial attempt to show how Ambedkar’s leadership and *Navayana* Buddhism negotiates the boundaries between Psychology, Buddhism and the caste question with an aim of emancipation of the oppressed masses and forging a new future for India and the world.

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

James E. Willis, III (University of Indianapolis)

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

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

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

### **Buddhism and Politics: Historical Questions and Emerging Approaches.**

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Paul Fuller (University of Edinburgh)

Nan Ouyang, (Ghent University)

Saul Tobias (California State University, Fullerton)

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

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

## DAY 3 – FRIDAY 23<sup>RD</sup> JUNE

### KEYNOTE

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

Ute Hüsken (Heidelberg University)

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

### PANELS AND PRESENTERS

#### **Texts, Language, and Literature 1**

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##### **A Buddhist View of Conceptualization and Ideology**

Beier Wang (Leipzig University)

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

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

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

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

Sajal Barua (The University of Hong Kong)

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

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

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

Stefan Karpik (Independent)

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

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

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

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

## **Modern and Western Encounters**

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

Elizabeth J. Harris (University of Birmingham)

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

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

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

### **The British Acceptance of the East Asian Buddhist Canon in the Nineteenth Century**

Jiang Wu (University of Arizona)

During the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, China witnessed a robust Buddhist revival resulting in the creation of a new privately carved repository of Buddhist scriptures. The canon, also known in the Buddhist world as the Tripitaka, consisted of 2,094 texts and 6,950 volumes and was brought to Japan by the Chinese monk Yinyuan Longqi 隱元隆琦 (1592-1673, pronounced *Ingen Ryūki* in Japanese). Yinyuan likewise founded the Japanese Ōbaku sect, the third largest Zen sect in Japan which is still active today. This canon was then recurred and printed in Japan and known as the Ōbaku canon. In 1875, a complete version of the Ōbaku canon was presented as a gift to the India Office Library in London by the Japanese ambassador Iwakura Tomomi 岩倉具視 (1825-1883), who visited Britain in 1872 after the successful Meiji restoration in 1868. British scholar

Samuel Beal created a shelf catalog of the received books in 1876, using English scholarly traditions to catalogue the canon. Several years later, Max Müller's (1823–1900) Japanese student Nanjō Bun'yū 南條文雄 (1849–1927) translated its original Chinese catalog into English. But Nanjō didn't note on the title page that this was the Ōbaku edition, carved in Japan; it was listed as the *Catalog of the Sacred Teaching of the Great Ming Tripitaka* (*Da Ming sanzang shengjiao mulu* 大明三藏聖教目錄). In this paper, I will focus on the diplomatic endeavor to bring the Ōbaku canon to Britain in the 1870s and how the East Asian Buddhist textual tradition was received in the West by crossing religious, cultural, and political boundaries. I argue that the Meiji restoration in 1868 and the dispatch of the Iwakura Mission in the following years provided the background of its transfer and acceptance in Britain. The efforts of British scholar-diplomats such as Samuel Beal, Harry Parkes, W. G. Aston, and Ernest Mason Satow are explained in detail.

### **Alexandre Kojève and Buddhism**

Isabel Jacobs (SOAS)

Russian-French philosopher Alexandre Kojève (1902-1968) is most famous for his lectures on Hegel in Paris of the 1930s, influencing intellectuals from Jacques Lacan to Georges Bataille. Kojève's original Hegelianism is often seen as the origin of French postmodernism. However, that Kojève began his philosophical career as a student of Buddhism is still almost unknown. In my paper, I argue that Kojève's interpretation of Hegel was in fact rooted in a unique acquaintance with Buddhist ideas, including notions of annihilation, self, dharma, ritual and freedom. At Heidelberg University, the young Kojève worked with the Indologist Max Walleser, immersing himself in Buddhist texts which he read in Sanskrit, Tibetan and Classical Chinese. Kojève's early work reflect a distinct interest in Buddhism: his first longer philosophical essay is an imagined encounter between Descartes and Buddha; and the book project *Atheism* (1931) centres around Buddhism and paganism, a topic that still occupied the late Kojève when writing his history of pagan philosophy in the 1950s. During these years, Kojève also extensively traveled through India and South Asia. Kojève's archives at the National Library in Paris are a treasure trove of unpublished texts and notes, many of them concerned with Buddhism and Classical Indian Philosophy, such as a 1929 treatise, written in Russian, about the Buddhist teaching of *karma*. While Kojève's main occupation became Hegel's philosophy, he never abandoned his interest in Buddhism. In my paper, I will give a brief overview of Buddhist motifs in Kojève, arguing that an encounter with Buddhist Studies may transform and enrich our perception of French thought in the twentieth century. Simultaneously, Kojève's unique reception of Buddhist ideas, that had a significant influence on contemporary thought, might also be of interest for scholars within the field of Buddhist Studies.

### **Constructing a Flexible Tibetan Buddhism**

Maria Sharapan (University of Jyväskylä)

This study is based on a larger dissertation research into the topic of Tibetan Buddhism in the West (Sharapan, 2021). My PhD dissertation dealt with how traditional Tibetan Buddhism is negotiated in the dialogue with Western converts. It was based on seven years of forum discussions, as well as interviews with convert Tibetan Buddhists in Helsinki, and their Tibetan teachers. Here I would like to look closely at my third data-set and focus on how traditionally-trained Tibetan Buddhist lamas, who reside and teach in the West, position themselves with respect to institutional Tibetan Buddhism. The data is seven interviews with monks from five different schools of Tibetan Buddhism. They were collected during 2017-2019, all but one, in Finland. In this study, I approach the interviews through the lens of Discursive Psychology, or DP, (Edwards & Potter, 1992) to see how the monks construct their identities as part of and in relation to their lineages and traditions (Nikander, 2012; Wooffitt & Widdicombe, 2006).

The interviews were not collected as anonymous, so each participant was aware that their words might have academic and personal consequences. Their conversations with the researcher (myself), who is both an ingroup (as a convert Tibetan Buddhist) and an outgroup (as a researcher), provide an insight into how an appealing but

continual image of the religious institution is constructed and their specific role is balanced with respect to it. The vibrant gap between traditional authenticity and the pressure of modernity has been pinpointed in research on Tibetan Buddhism before (McKenzie, 2011; Konik, 2009). However, here I would like to adopt a micro level social constructionist lens to see how the process unfolds in talk.

## **Across Lineages, Schools, and Religions**

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### **The Twentieth Century Sectarianisation of Buddhism in Vietnam**

Alexander Soucy (Saint Mary's University)

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

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

Rachel Pang (Davidson College)

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

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

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

## **Gods without Worshippers: Religious Boundary-Making in Mathura**

Harsha Gautam (The University of Texas at Austin)

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

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

## **Crossing Holocaust Boundaries: Zen Peacemakers in Auschwitz-Birkenau**

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

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

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

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Sujatha Meegama(The Courtauld Institute of Art)

Lori Wong (The Courtauld Institute of Art)

Irina Zhambaldorzhieva (The Courtauld Institute of Art)

Pearl Jackson-Payen (The Courtauld Institute of Art)

Aiken Unni (The Courtauld Institute of Art)

Liutong Yi (The Courtauld Institute of Art)

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

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

## Texts, Language, and Literature 2

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### Who Can Become a Saint? Disputing the Boundaries between Common People and Saints in Early Mahāyāna

Yixiu JIANG (Leiden University)

The dichotomy between common people (*prthagjana*) and saints (*ārya*) is familiar in almost every context of Buddhism. The term “saint,” signifying one’s superior spiritual status, is generally understood as applicable to someone who penetrates the noble truths (*ārya-satyāni*). However, despite this common understanding, a careful examination of this dichotomy in Indian Buddhist scriptures will show us that the boundaries between common people and saints are never completely settled—especially when it is discussed in relation to other schemes of spiritual progress. For example, the threshold of sainthood is set to different bodhisattva grounds (*bhūmis*) according to different accounts of bodhisattva ground systems. Regarding the varied accounts of the boundaries between common people and saints, although previous scholars have done much work on indexing different criteria for sainthood, little attention has been paid to the implication of such boundary disputes for their concurrent Buddhist communities.

In this paper, I will examine how the boundaries between common practitioners and saint bodhisattvas are drawn and redrawn in early Mahāyāna sūtras and what such alterations of boundaries indicate. In my opinion, the constant changes made to the criteria of sainthood reflect the dilemma between the need for testimonies of the

feasibility of the bodhisattva path and the avoidance of sanctimoniousness—two concerns that are frequently brought up in early Mahāyāna sūtras like the *Prajñāpāramitā*s. In light of this perspective, I will read the complicated and often self-contradicting accounts of the transition from a common person to a saint as evidence of the tensions provoked by the above dilemma within early Mahāyāna communities. Finally, I will demonstrate how later Mahāyāna scholastic traditions resolve this dilemma by effectively limiting followers from crossing the boundary between common practitioners and saints.

### **Reflecting on the Śākyabhikṣhus: Building on L. S. Cousins' Proposal**

M. K. Edwards Leese (Independent)

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

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

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

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

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

Tiantian Cai (University of Wisconsin-Madison)

This paper approaches a doctrinal debate about the way of meditation and enlightenment between Buddhist suddenists represented by a Chinese Ch’an master Moheyan 摩訶衍 and Tibetan gradualists around the late 8th century in Tibet. The major focus is the intertextuality in historical writings of the debate: one is *Dunwu dacheng zhenglijue* 頓悟大乘正理決 by Wang Xi 王錫; another is *Bhāvanākrama*, a meditative teaching by Kamalaśīla. Given that the *Laṅkāvatāra Sūtra* (hereafter, *the Laṅka*) significantly influenced Chinese Ch’an transition and was extensively quoted from both the gradualist and suddenist, the study, on the one hand, examines how the *Laṅka* was treated as scriptural authority in *Dunwu dacheng zhenglijue* 頓悟大乘正理決 (hereafter, *Zhenglijue*) by Moheyan; on the other hand, it investigates how the *Laṅka* became cited and played critical roles in *Bhāvanākrama* (the stages of meditation, hereafter, BhK), to the extent that the representative of the gradualist, Kamalaśīla, made delicate illustration about the underlying logic to convey the idea of gradual meditation. The

study finds that intertextuality not only is applied as strategy for legitimation but also reveals the dynamics between different standpoints in a debate for authority. It sheds light on potential factors and aspects for the divergent interpretation on texts, which pushes the boundaries between suddenist and gradualists in ways of perceiving plausible synthesis and similarities. I argue that, on the one hand, Kamalaśīla strategically cited *the Lañka* to underline the stepping model of reasoning as a necessity in insight meditation for legitimization, inducing “correct” reading on *the Lañka* and opposing the derivative reading made by suddenists. On the other hand, the suddenists’ selective quotations, instead of directly denying the necessity of practice, shows a shift from meditative cultivation to a sudden experiential realization of non-conceptuality. I argue that neither Kamalaśīla nor Mo he yan could represent what is the genuine reading on the *Lañka*. Rather, their commonness in deploying scriptural authority implies a common strategy of legitimization. The need for legitimization and corresponding variegated interpretations on quotations induces the insufficiency of self-consistence, which both sides tried to remedy each meditation diagram, yet leaving unsatisfied self-justifications and limits.

### Texts, Language, and Literature 3

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

Martin A. Mills (University of Aberdeen)

The salience of boundaries as a universal organiser of human affairs derives, in large part, from the post-war emergence of ethnicity and nationalism as central vehicles for the discussion of identity, a position which in itself was informed both by the United Nations’ rejection of empire as any basis for political recognition or international relations and by the assumption of formal equality between self-determining groups. However, much of Buddhist history is dominated by the reach of imperial systems and powers, whose primary dispositions were towards (i) the *hierarchical* organisation of both cultural and religious traditions and of populations and subordinate polities, and (ii) the centripetal *incorporation* of key facets of subordinated cultures. Such features are common to imperial systems from the Roman through to the British, Ottoman and Ching, requiring radically different approaches to understanding inter- and intracultural dynamics.

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

#### **Tea Samādhi: Material Display and Imagination of Chan Buddhism**

Ding Kehan (University of Edinburgh)

Tea has been commonly perceived as bonding with East Asian Chan Buddhist practice, and the bond has been termed as “Chan-tea” (*chancha* 禪茶/ *chazen* ちゃぜん茶禪/ *seoncha* 선차). In Japanese and Korean traditions,

tea-making has been regarded to assimilate the message of Buddhist enlightenment, thus offering a platform to approximate the state of *samādhi* by concentrating on tea-making process (*tea samādhi* 다삼매 茶三昧).

This sacred use of tea ceremonies as Chan practice has been taken as a trait shared by and even derived from Chinese Chan Buddhism. However, this paper contents that this long-standing idea on tea is more of a material imagination of Chan Buddhism rather than presentation in material form, leaving alone the modern Japanese discourse constructing the unity of Buddhism and arts of various forms. Based on large-scale analysis of Chinese monastic regulations/rules of purity (*qinggui* 清規), this paper argues that tea is not exclusively or superiorly associated with Buddhist practice in medieval China (refer to the period from Tang to Yuan, Tang 618–907CE, Song 960–1279 CE, Yuan 1271–1368 CE). Instead, it proposes that tea rituals, along with soup rituals, medicine rituals as well as other ritual elements like orientations and instruments, efficiently code a system of monastic ritual language that symbolically convey messages according to ritual occasions and ritual participants etc.

### **The Inner and Outer Bounds of Buddhist Conversion**

Hélène de Brux (LMU Munich / EPHE Paris)

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

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

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

## **Education**

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### **The Students Are Ready, Will the Teachers Please Appear**

Monica Sanford (Harvard Divinity School)

For over twenty years, a split has been developing in graduate-level higher education on Buddhism. Roughly defined, that split is between traditional Buddhist studies on the one hand, and ‘theological,’ ministerial, chaplaincy, or spiritual leadership vocations on the other. This boundary has largely been reified by Buddhist studies scholars themselves as they seek to legitimize their topic of study within an academy prone to delegitimate minority religions.

Meanwhile, students with a deep interest in Buddhism are seeking graduate-level higher education for the purpose of using the Dharma to do practical good in the world. They have no intention of entering the academy (though some do). Rather, they become chaplains, non-profit organizers, advocates, teachers, authors, and religious leaders. While many continue traditional Buddhist education within their temple, sangha, or Buddhist community, they also seek the expertise and credibility that a master’s or doctoral degree can offer.

These students find themselves in a strangely bifurcated educational world. In a single course they may read a Christian book on spiritual care alongside a collection of scriptures and secondary literature from Buddhist studies scholars. In both cases they must engage in constant interpretation, of Christian ministry or counseling psychology books for their applicability to Buddhist worldviews and populations and of the Buddhist studies literature for its utility in applied and practical settings. They spend much of their time building bridges between the two academic worlds, sometimes unsuccessfully.

This paper will 1) outline the needs of these students, who collectively account for several hundred across various institutions in Anglophone countries, 2) share some successful examples of scholarship that bridges rigorous academic expertise with practical topics, including fruitful collaborations with disciplines such as the social sciences, and 3) charge its listeners to reconsider their potential audiences when producing scholarship, expanding the borders of the field.

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

Nicholas S. Hobhouse (University of Hong Kong)

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

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

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

### **Play and Pedagogy in Buddhist Studies**

Nick Swann (University of South Wales)

The importance of play in early years learning is well-attested, as skills and knowledge are developed through games and puzzles rather than imparted through didactic learning. Over time didactic learning takes over, until play is little used and even when it is students are typically conscious that it is an educational tactic rather than an apparently enjoyable end in itself. With adult learners, play - often in the form of role-play or perhaps a boardgame that demonstrates a feature of e.g. economics - tends to be used to stress-test knowledge and understanding and put it into action rather than impart learning *ab initio*.

This paper explores the potential for play to be used with adult learners learning Pali. A formal, philological, approach to learning Pali can be a barrier to those unfamiliar with inflected Indo-European languages, and while

the rote learning of grammar and vocabulary may suit some learners, many find the idea overwhelming and off-putting. Immersing students in a ‘choose your own adventure’ style story, supported by other game activities, adds emotional investment to the learning experience and puts grammar and vocabulary into a context more relatable than lists of words and tables of paradigms. Note that I *do* consider these lists and tables to be crucial to an in-depth understanding of Pali, but they can be introduced at a much later stage.

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

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

Rusha Jin (University of Edinburgh)

Since 2006, the short-period training course called “Training Course for Patriotic religious figures” organized by the Department of Religious Studies of Renmin University of China has been enrolling students from the heads of the national and provincial and autonomous regional religious groups of the five major religious groups, including Buddhism, Taoism, Islam, Catholicism and Christianity. The course is organized by the Renmin University of China under the commission of the United Front Work Department of the CPC Central Committee and the Ministry of Education to offer academic training to leaders of religious groups. Although the starting point of the program is rather political, in China, where a relatively strict boundary exists between religion and secular, it is rare for ordinary university students and people from religious groups to study in the same classroom, and it brings influences to both sides. The purpose of this paper is to take this training course as an example to discuss the impact on the boundary between students and faculty members of Buddhist Studies and Buddhists when they meet in an academic environment, especially in the Chinese context.

## **Philosophy**

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

Dobdon Maksarov (SOAS)

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

the vaibhāṣika view on emptiness was refuted by sautrāntika; the sautrāntika view was refuted by cittamātra, the cittamātra view was refuted by mādhyaṃka-svatantrika, whose view was in turn refuted by mādhyaṃka-prasaṅgika. In that case, denying another view does not mean a complete disagreement but the development or further refining of that view. This stepwise approach blurs the distinctions between the various Buddhist schools and makes the constructed boundaries less solid.

### **Exploring the Boundaries of Buddhist Logic: Challenges and Opportunities**

Taryn Sue (University of Chicago)

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

Buddhist logic in the Tibetan tradition presents a challenge to this divided approach given the ways in which it transcends strictly bifurcated categories of religion versus philosophy. While it has largely been analyzed through the lens of philosophy by western scholarship, we see that it is also implicated in community, identity, and legitimation.

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

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

Allan Furic (University of Edinburgh)

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

### **Iconography in Communications: The Six Stupas in Fanhualou**

Ziyi Shao (SOAS)

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

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

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

### **A Cross-boundary Product of Buddhism, Confucianism, and Daoism: The Belief in Guan Gong in Mongolian Buddhist Prints of the Qing dynasty**

Run Gu (University of Tübingen)

This research seeks to assess how Guan Gong worship, an essential theme in Mongolian Buddhist prints of the Qing dynasty, displays as a cross-boundary product of Daoist culture, Confucian traditions, and Tibetan religions. The Guan Gong character in prints is diverse and not only considered a Dharma protector but also appears as a blend of identities with other Mongolian deities. An example is that the total red-armored Guan Gong is considered an incarnation of the Mongolian god of war and wealth, Begtse Chen, while sometimes his red-faced features are overlooked and thus confused with the Tibetan epic hero King Gesar. Despite using the same text Romance of the Three Kingdoms as reference, huge differences existed between the Mongolian Buddhist prints and the Qing court paintings of Guan Gong, in terms of painting structure, style, technique, and accompanying figures. All Mongolian Buddhist prints featuring Guan Gong appear with Red Hare horse, mainly because it was martyred along with him, but also because of the peculiar Mongolian veneration of force and horse worship. The influence of Daoism is also well noted in Mongolian Buddhist prints of the Qing dynasty. Core Daoist figures such as Wenchang Wang and Zhao Gongming and Daoist motifs such as five elements and eight trigrams often appear alongside Guan Gong, and some figures' clothing, posture, hand-held props, and demeanor have clear Daoist style. This study argues that the multi-dimensional image of Guan Gong in Mongolian Buddhist prints emphasizes his qualities of bravery, loyalty, and all-winning. It aimed to spiritually pacify the people and stabilize the border while also interacting with Confucian culture and expressing surrender and loyalty to the Qing dynasty for political purposes.

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

Jill Sudbury (Independent)

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

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

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

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

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## **Texts, Language, and Literature 4**

### **The Redescription of Buddhism by Modern Tamil Śaivas**

Jesse Pruitt (University of Toronto)

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

religious and linguistic communities' relationship, one which boiled over only a few decades subsequent to the publication of these texts.

### **Marking Boundaries in the Buddhist Publishing World of Republican China**

Gregory Adam Scott (University of Manchester)

In the early twentieth century, lay and monastic Buddhists in China produced thousands of new publications, including scriptural texts, commentaries, monographs, and periodicals. As the range of titles grew, however, publishers had to categorise these works in book catalogues for their reading public, drawing in part upon canonical schema but also adding entirely new genres to the corpus. My presentation will review several major Chinese Buddhist book catalogues from the 1910s to the 1930s and explore how their paratexts and internal organisation worked to help readers make sense of what was a potentially bewildering array of texts. In doing so I will examine how Buddhist publishers defined new types of textual boundaries, both those internal to the Buddhist publishing world, and those that marked off Buddhist books from texts seen as external to the tradition. By exploring the ways in which these publishers sought to structure their world of Buddhist texts, we can better understand how ideas about Buddhist knowledge and teaching were changing, and how the vibrant Buddhist print culture of this era helped to shape an innovative renewal of Buddhist learning and practice.

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

Xiaoqiang Meng (Leiden University)

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

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

### **Sex, Sexuality, and Asceticism**

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#### **Mononormativity, Compersion, and the Four Immeasurables**

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

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

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

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

### **“Ladyboys” (katoey) in the Renunciant World: Religious Experiences of Thai Transgendered People in Northern Thailand**

Amnuaypond Kidpromma and James Taylor (Chiang Mai University)

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

### **Demarcating the Middle in the Pali Vinaya**

Antony Fiorucci (Uppsala University)

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

The early Buddhist monastic tradition navigated a complex social terrain, where sensual conduct associated with *kāma* is viewed as the ethical prerogative of householders and where harsh asceticism is frequently ascribed to members other renunciatory groups (*tiṭṭhiya*). Articulating a program of discipline that keenly avoids both these perceived extremes is a recurrent concern of the monastic legislators who compiled the Pali Vinaya.

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