Buddhism, business and economic relations – in Asia and beyond

Program and abstracts

BBB Copenhagen Conference
12-14 October 2016

University of Copenhagen
Njalsgade 136, 2300 Copenhagen
Room 27.0.09, building 27
**WEDNESDAY - PROGRAM**

08:30  Registration and coffee
09:15-9:30  Welcome
9:30-10:30  **Key note - Dan Smyer-Yü:**
            Symbioses and Antipathies of Charisma and Money: Tibetan Buddhist Social Engagement in Contemporary China
10:30-11:00  Break
11:00-12:30  **SESSION 1**
            **Roger Casas:** Buddhist Brokers and Unworthy Exemplars: The Morality of Exchange Among Tai Lue Monastics in Southwestern China
            **Chaksham Tsering:** Economic Development and Merit Accumulation: Recent Changes in Tibetan Pre-Death Ritual (Gson Chos) in Gling Rgye Village, Reb Gong
            **Laura Hornig:** Myanmar’s Small Businesses – Buddhist Beliefs in a Period of Economic Change
12:30-1:30  Lunch
1:30-3:00  **SESSION 2**
            **Michael Jerryson:** Marketing the Buddha and its Blasphemy
            **Joshua Musiol:** Singapore’s Spiritual Caterers and the National Imaginary: Technologies for the Aspirational Citizens
            **Kristina Jonutyte:** “A Hungry Buryat Doesn’t Think of Buddha”: Sangha and
Buddhist Exchange in Post-Soviet Buryatia

3:00-3:30  Break

03:30-5:00  SESSION 3

Tashi Lundup: Tourism and Religion: An Understanding of Authenticity and Commodification of Monastic Culture in Ladakh (India)

Elizabeth Williams-Oerberg: The Spectacle of Buddhist Festivals in Leh, Ladakh: The Intersection of Buddhism and Tourism and the Reinvention of Buddhist Rituals

Brooke Schedneck: Between Openness and Accommodation: The Agency of Buddhist Monks in Thailand’s Tourism Landscape

05:30  Reception with light meal

THURSDAY - PROGRAM

08:30  Coffee

09:00-10:00  Key note - Lionel Obadia: Economies of Religion, Buddhism and Economy, Buddhist Economics: Challenges and Perspectives

10:00-10:30  Break

10:30-12:30  SESSION 4

Trine Brox: Buddhist Commodities in a Sino-Tibetan Contact Zone

Levi McLaughlin: The Soka Gakkai Economy: A Bottom-Up Perspective on
Cycles of Exchange That Propel Japan’s Largest New Religion

**Xiaohai Zhu:** Transformed

“Humanistic Buddhism” from 1900s-2000s, an Economic Political Analysis from Taixu to Hsingyen

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1:30-3:00 **SESSION 5**

**Paul Nietupski:** The Interface of Religion, Economy, and Politics in Amdo

**Mick Deneckere:** The Economic Thought of Shimaji Mokurai

**Berthe Jansen:** Monastic Economic Policies in Pre-Modern Tibet: Precedents for the Present?

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**Emilia Sulek:** Caterpillar Fungus and the Economy of Sinning. How Tibetan Buddhist Cope with ‘Stained’ Money from the Caterpillar Fungus Boom

**Chipamong Chowdhury:** Dharmic Economy: Monastic Diaspora and their Economic Engagement in Asia

**Jørn Borup:** Prosperity Buddhism and Religious Capital
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Entrepreneurialism and Political Aspirations of Theravadin Saints in Mainland Southeast Asia

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03:30-4:30 DISCUSSION ABOUT BOOK PUBLICATION AND FUTURE COLLABORATION

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Keynote Lectures

Obadia, Lionel
Professor in Anthropology, Université Lyon

ECONOMIES OF RELIGION, BUDDHISM AND ECONOMY, BUDDHIST ECONOMICS: CHALLENGES AND PERSPECTIVES

Social sciences, Humanities, religious studies have undertaken different “turns” during the last decades – “linguistic”, “cognitive”, “spatial” or “global” turns, and lately, an “economic turn”. Since the early 1990s, religious beliefs, behaviors or organizations have indeed significantly been interpreted in economic terms. The lexical surface of such terms has dramatically extended, and their position in theoretical debates has become more central since the 1990s. Departing from the classic (but still vividly questioned) examination of the relationships between “religion-and-economy”, this new approach, namely “economics of religion”, is a paradigmatic and epistemological shift from “economic transactions in religion” to “consuming religion as a good”, from ontology to analogy, from economy to economics. Despite significant theoretical progress, the economic paradigm is under the fire of critics. The “economic turn”, if ever there is one, raises crucial questions on the relevance of the models (do we need models taken from economics to understand religion?), the ontology of the phenomena (are religious “things” turning into economic ones?), the heuristics of concepts (like “market”, “consumption”, “rationality”, “value”…). Among others critics, one is for instance that this approach is supposed to apply to every religion in every region and especially modernist movements searching for adaptations in the context of global capitalism and the worldwide extension of consumer culture. But the model has been framed after the vicissitudes of Western Christianity, in the intellectual background of the North-American inclination to view religious history through the lens of economics (in contrast with the European political history of secularization). To what
extent, and under which conditions can these models apply to Asian religious realities, especially in the case of Buddhism, which is moreover torn between the humanistic project of “Buddhist economics” (as in Schumacher’s idea) and the classical study of “economy in Buddhism”. In between, is there a place for the “economics of Buddhism”?

Prohl, Inken
Institut für Religionswissenschaft, Zentrum für Europäische Geschichts- und Kulturwissenschaften, Universität Heidelberg

**BUDDHISM SELLS - BUDDHIST RELATED IMAGES, SEMANTICS AND DESIGNS IN CONTEMPORARY MARKETING**

Pictures of the Buddha are used in marketing campaigns for furniture, foods, toys and all kinds of goods. Advertisements rely on the magic of the words “Zen” or “mindful” as in “Zen Organic Cereals” or “Mindful Mayo” as well as on the power of Buddhist inspired designs as allusions to what could be understood as temples, rock gardens or silently meditating monks (not nuns?).

In short: Buddhism sells. Based on theories of branding and marketing, as well recent analytical approaches to the relationship between religion and popular culture my paper will shed some light on the reasons why Buddhist semantics became such powerful tools of branding and if there are also goods and parts of highly industrial societies where the power of Buddhist branding does not work.

Furthermore my paper will raise the question what this transformation means for “Buddhism”. Does Buddhism – or to put it more accurately – do Buddhist people simply become prisoners of the current system of neoliberalism or are we to discern innovative dynamics of “Consumed Religion”? 
SYMBIOSES AND ANTIPATHIES OF CHARISMA AND MONEY: TIBETAN BUDDHIST SOCIAL ENGAGEMENTS IN CONTEMPORARY CHINA

In this paper I discuss the social symbioses and moral antipathies of money and religious charisma in the revitalizations and spread of Tibetan Buddhism in China. Based on my ethnographic work, I wish to present an argument that the growth of Tibetan Buddhism in urban China is a dynamic interplay of concurrent creation-destruction, meaning that the market creatively destroys traditional forms of Tibetan Buddhism while it simultaneously destructively creates new forms of its practice. In both ethnographic and theoretical terms I discuss how money, the primary indicator of wealth in the Chinese market economy, functions as the principal creation-destruction instrument simultaneously converting religious desires to commercial values and engendering what I call “the charismatic community” of Chinese Tibetan Buddhists with its moral dilemma concerning the religiosity of money and the spirituality of Buddhism. I argue that materiality and spirituality do not have clear-cut boundaries but are rather inextricably intertwined as shown in the case of the multi-dimensional encounters of the worldly absoluteness of money and the sanctified inalienability of Buddhist teachings in the politics of religion and ethnicity in contemporary China.
List of Abstracts (alphabetical order)

Abrahms-Kavunenko, Saskia
Max Planck Institute for Social Anthropology

MONEY AS SEED, MONEY AS FRUIT: KARMA, POVERTY AND WEALTH IN ULAANBAATAR

People are always complaining about politicians. They are stealing from us. They are always taking, taking. But my mother used to say that they are always taking because they are the reincarnations of Chinese merchants and Sheiks that the Mongols robbed in the past. Now they have been reborn to take from us. They take our wealth and our minerals and they give us nothing back. It is our karma.

Many Mongolians believe that a person’s wealth or poverty is the creator of one’s future karma and the consequence of one’s past. The Mongolian word for karma (üiliin ur) literally means an action’s result or an action’s seed. Influenced by local Buddhist interpretations of karma many Mongolians believe that wealth and prosperity are linked to the actions of their former lives. Likewise, the way that a person makes their money now will have future consequences for themself, their family and perhaps even their country.

Whilst there is a degree of fatalism concerning the relative means of the rich and the poor, the accumulation of wealth in this lifetime is considered to carry with it potential difficulties. Mining, believed to be problematic as it disturbs local spirits and pollutes the environment, is now the dominant source of income for the country. Corruption is seen to erode social ties, and undermine prosperous futures. In the religious sphere, as religious specialists make money from other people’s suffering there are certain circumscriptions about religious rituals and their appropriate remuneration.

The capital city Ulaanbaatar is thought by many to be rife with corruption, inequality and spiritual danger. Within this context many people seek out efficacious rituals to enable the flow of money to
oneself and one’s family. It is a common practice to have lamas visit homes or businesses to read prayers in order to clear obstacles, and many people participate in rituals believed to be efficacious in the generation and multiplication of wealth.

This talk will investigate perceptions of wealth and poverty in relation to Buddhist ideas and practices in present day Ulaanbaatar. I will look at how Mongolian temples and monasteries situate themselves amidst discourses surrounding karma, wealth and poverty in a country where to have too much or too little is frequently perceived to be directly correlated with one’s spiritual life.

Borup, Jørn
Associate Professor, Aarhus University

PROSPERITY BUDDHISM AND RELIGIOUS CAPITAL
In the West, Buddhism as a ‘world rejecting’ religion based on ascetic renunciation and non-economic spirituality is an often used default narrative. Immateriality is also in many Buddhist cultures kept as a symbolic ideal of authenticity. Economy and materiality is, however, inherently part of Buddhism, also in Japan, where monasteries, temples and associations throughout history have been wealthy organizations. Contemporary temple Buddhism is, however, threatened by secularization, non-Buddhist ritual business, and new religious movements. This paper will investigate the economy in and of contemporary Japanese Buddhism and systems of value transactions. The concept of ‘prosperity Buddhism’ and religious capital will be explored by comparing temple Buddhism with two kinds of New Religious Movements; Soka Gakkai and Happy Science. It is argued that the transaction models of the latter two are different from the former by being differently adjusted to the market, but at the same time they function as transformed versions of traditional Buddhist gift exchange models.
BUDDHIST COMMODITIES IN A SINO-TIBETAN CONTACT ZONE

Chengdu in Southwest China, neighbouring eastern Tibet, has been portrayed by Professor Dan Smyer Yü (2011: 22) as "...an urban portal of the Tibetan Buddhist revival in China" and the Han-Chinese converts to Tibetan Buddhism as consumers of Tibetan Buddhist spirituality. Some of these Han-Chinese Buddhist urbanites even find work in the city’s Tibetan quarter in order to be close to the Tibetans, their spirituality, or the businesses that are connected with them – so I have learned during my numerous visits there. This paper is based upon research using the Tibetan quarter as a laboratory with the aim to understand how Buddhism mediates Sino-Tibetan exchange relations in urban China. Chengdu is a gateway city for Han Chinese who seek Tibetan Buddhist spirituality, but conversely also a gateway city for Tibetan entrepreneurs seeking material benefits. They meet at the Tibetan market to deal with Buddhism and money matters. The market can therefore be seen as a ‘contact zone’ (Pratt 1992) – one of those social spaces where people from diverse socio-cultural and ethnic-linguistic backgrounds move in and out (Brox & Koktvedgaard Zeitzen [in press]), and where Buddhism arranges encounters between different kinds of economies, including Buddhist economic ethics. At this market, you can buy everything that you need for your Tibetan Buddhist practice – as a lay person, nun or monk. It can be a complicated matter, however, to shop for Buddhist commodities that later will be used in Buddhist practice, be offered as a gift, or be worshipped on an altar. In my paper, I will disentangle some of these complications by looking into “the question of why certain things
matter.” (Miller 1998: 16), and I will point to the ways in which issues of authenticity and knowledge become important keys for mattering.

Brumann, Christoph
Head of Research Group, Max Planck Institute for Social Anthropology, Honorary Professor of Anthropology, University of Halle-Wittenberg

TEMPLES IN MOTION: THE ECONOMY OF TEMPLE RELOCATIONS IN KYOTO, JAPAN
With its collection of head temples and educational institutions, particularly of the Rinzai Zen and Jōdo schools, Japan's ancient capital Kyoto is the undisputed centre of Buddhism in the country. Yet here too, most temples are /matsuji/ (branch temples), that is single-priest family temples that cater to the religious needs - largely funerary and memorial rituals - of parishioner households (/danka/) of often long standing that sustain the temple with their ritual fees and donations. Due to demographic decline, decreasing reliance on "incense money" (funeral contributions by mourners), alternative service providers, and changing visions of family continuity, this model has come under duress, with many temples facing an uncertain future. For temples in downtown Kyoto, one way to cope with this challenge has been to relocate the temple to the outskirts of the city. Selling central-city lots often finances much more spacious grounds and new buildings in quieter surroundings without burdening the /danka/ in ways that are no longer seen as appropriate. Based on fieldwork in Kyoto, the paper will look into the main protagonists' economic considerations and what these moves do to temple-parishioner relationships.
BUDDHIST BROKERS AND UNWORTHY EXEMPLARY: THE MORALITY OF EXCHANGE AMONG TAI LUE MONASTICS IN SOUTHWEST CHINA

Thanks to its gradual integration in national and regional economic webs and pushed by sustained double-digit economic growth in China, the small frontier prefecture of Sipsong Panna is at present one of the fastest-developing areas in the Economic Quadrangle formed by that country plus Thailand, Laos, and Burma-Myanmar. In a context of accelerated socio-economic change, the Tai Lue, the largest community of Theravada Buddhists in the country, are apparently destined to play a secondary role as exoticized commodities for tourist consumption. Nevertheless, Lue monks and former monks occasionally succeed at infiltrating Han Chinese business networks (Ch: guanxi), and thus at mediating between traditional and new forms of exchange while remaining moral exemplars who preserve and promote selected elements from their inherited cultural stock (Laidlaw 2013). While successfully navigating urban economies, these Buddhist brokers place themselves in an ambiguous position vis à vis their rural communities, becoming subject to evaluation and criticism by a ‘moral economy’ springing from collective, religion-based values (Fassin 2011).

Based on long-term ethnographic engagement with local monastic groups, this paper explores the connections between religious and economic discourses and practices among the Tai Lue of Sipsong Panna, paying special attention to the Buddhist ‘morality of exchange’ and to the potential tension developing between individuals’ short-term goals, and long-term ones on the part of the broader community (Parry and Bloch 1989). How do the social skills and connections acquired while in the monkhood become instrumental for Tai Lue men in the process of negotiating the
contemporary capitalist economy and business networks? To what extent does a Buddhist ‘moral economy’ sets limits to individuals whose behaviour is expected to be guided by selflessness and sacrifice for the community? Looking at how religious specialists may benefit from the new economic context, the paper investigates whether Tai Lue monastic businessmen can ultimately subvert traditional stereotypes and cultural hierarchies that depict members of this minority group as ‘backward’ and unfit to succeed in the rapidly shifting Chinese economic context (Sturgeon 2012).

Chowdhury, Chipamong
Independent researcher

DHARMIC ECONOMY: MONASTIC DIASPORA AND THEIR ECONOMIC ENGAGEMENT IN ASIA
This paper explores the understudied issue of the relationship between Theravāda monastic diaspora and their economic engagement in their home countries. Theravāda monastic community in the West is one of larger global Buddhist monastic networks in the contemporary world. Similar to lay Buddhist communities, these immigrant Buddhist monks maintain strong socio-cultural and political connection to their homelands. Often, these connections are sustained through economic mediation. They run religious NGOs and charitable trusts through which they engage in various causes – philanthropy, social welfare works and domestic developmental initiatives—that benefit their country of origins. Thus, transnational temple based social welfare enterprises certainly have great implications for economic welfare in Asia. While this demonstrates about the change and development of Buddhist monastic discourses and practices it also points out several fascinating issues and raises urgent questions about monks’ dealing with money, finance and business. Among others, the paper addresses following questions:
what is the relationship between religion and development? What role does a transnational Buddhist monk play in social engagement and economic management in the countries of origin? What does it mean handling money and finance for a Buddhist monk? Based on ethnographic account and historical studies on Burmese and Bangladeshi Buddhist temples and organizations in New York, the paper examines Theravāda immigrant monks’ economic activities directed towards their native countries. By focusing on the manners and means by which Theravāda monastic diaspora engage with spiritual economy, the paper seeks to understand the intersection between monastic migration and money and religious authority and economic forces.

Deneckere, Mick
Flanders Research Foundation (FWO) Postdoctoral Fellow, Ghent University, Institute of Japanese Studies & Centre for Buddhist Studies

THE ECONOMIC THOUGHT OF SHIMAJI MOKURAI
The Japanese True Pure Land Buddhist Shimaji Mokurai (1838–1911) was at the forefront of the Buddhist struggle for survival when the Meiji government employed an invented Shinto as a means of unifying the Japanese people to help transform Japan into a modern state. Mokurai is credited for having introduced to Japan modern notions of religion, religious freedom and the separation of church and state, after undertaking a journey to Europe in the early 1870s as a member of the first Japanese Buddhist Mission to the West, organised by his head temple Nishi Honganji. Numerous studies have been devoted to this aspect of Mokurai’s intellectual legacy. Next to his preoccupation with the relationship between Buddhism and politics, however, Mokurai also developed notions that were in line with the Meiji government’s “rich country, strong army” ideals of the early 1870s. Reflecting the interconnectedness of the slogan’s two components,
Mokurai was not only clear about Buddhist priests’ duty to serve their country, he also had a unique vision on the financial cost of military expeditions and reparations, as illustrated in an essay he wrote in August 1874, *On the Taiwan Expedition*. In my talk I will present Mokurai’s economic thought as it transpires in this essay and analyse it against the particular historical conditions of early Meiji Japan. In order to put Mokurai’s ideas into perspective, I will make a brief comparison with the economic thought that the True Pure Land Buddhist Sada Kaiseki (1818–1882) developed in the late 1870s and early 1880s. Mokurai’s views were based on the assumption that, even though the short-term outcome might temporarily seem disadvantageous, Japan’s noble morals would translate into national prosperity in the long term. Meanwhile, one of the fundamental themes in Kaiseki’s economic model was that business should only be judged according to the benefits it could bring to Japan and its people. He thereby suggested boycotting foreign goods as a possible strategy. Although they were both inspired by nationalistic sentiment and their Shin Buddhist background, eventually Mokurai and Kaiseki’s views were substantially different, as is for example demonstrated by Mokurai’s opinion that a temporary disadvantage ought to be endured not only for the greater good of Japan, but for that of the entire world. Next to discussing the contents of these Buddhists’ economic theories, I will present the development of their ideas within the context of the role that True Pure Land Buddhists played in the Japanese Enlightenment movement of the 1870s. In this way I aim to draw attention to these thinkers’ agency and to their participation in Japan’s modernisation process.
Dhanapala, W.M.
Senior Lecturer, Department of Sociology and Anthropology. University of Sri Jayewardenepura, Sri Lanka

A STUDY ON THE SOCIAL IMPACTS OF COMMODIFICATION OF BUDDHIST RELIGIOUS PROPERTIES IN CONTEMPORARY SRI LANKA

This research is concerned with commodification of Buddhist religious properties and consequent social change in contemporary Sri Lanka. Properties of Buddhist temples includes lands with material resources, structures, cultivations and variety of material symbols of Buddhism. The economic value of those properties is replaced with a religious sacred value once they are offered to the use of Buddhist monasteries. According to the Buddhist tradition movable and immovable material things are offered for the exclusive use of Mahasangha (The entire community of Buddhist monks) who have come and will be coming from the four directions in the future (“Agatha anagatha sagasa chathudisa” in Pali Language). The collective ownership of religious properties, known as “Sangika properties” in Pali, negates the individual possession and enjoyment of them, a practice that comply with the principle of renounce from all material and non-material possessions to embark on the path leading to Nirvana. As the “Sangika” is an exclusive collective possession by all the monks, a layman who makes use of such properties commits a grievous sin according to the religious norms. This sacred and profane division of properties remained well institutionalized in the traditional societies but underwent a dramatic change with the expansion of market economy. This change seemed to have undermined the concept of “Sangika” facilitating commodification of sacred properties and related use of them. This phenomenon was empirically studied in terms of a sample of 20 Buddhist temples located in the Colombo district. The objectives of the study were to explore the commercial use of religious properties and explain the social impacts of that commodification of them. Data
were gathered by means of observation and interviews with 120 monks and laymen. According to the findings lands and structures of the selected temples had been used for Business purposes, parking of vehicles, construction of building materials, storage of commercial goods, workshops and garages, boarding places, private tuition classes and private educational institutes, office and hall facilities, private medical centers, sports clubs, NGO and residential purposes. All of these had been means of income for the temple. This particular commodification has caused a considerable change in the traditional religious identity of temple transforming them into semi-economic centers catering to secular needs of people. Consequently, the monks have come to play secular and commercial roles which had not been prescribed for them by the disciplines of monkhood. Commercial use of them seemed to have diverted devotees to temples in remote areas where the religious environment is well maintained. This passive reaction of devotees and the benefits of that change reinforce the commodification. Accordingly, it is concluded that the Theravada identity of Buddhist temples and religious role of monks have been undermined by the commodification of temple properties while nullifying the sacred meaning of the concept of “Sangika properties”.

Hornig, Laura
Max Planck Institute for Social Anthropology

MYANMAR’S SMALL BUSINESSES – BUDDHIST BELIEFS IN A PERIOD OF ECONOMIC CHANGE
This paper is based on my ongoing PhD research in Myanmar. My research is rooted in economic anthropology and seeks to explore links between religion and economic behavior. Over the past six months, I have collected qualitative data in a number of small family-run businesses in Pathein, a middle sized town in lowland Myanmar. The businesses that I study differ in kind as well as in size. Concrete
religious practices are present in all of those businesses but I argue that on a less obvious level Buddhism also shapes people’s perception of economic realities and consequently influences their work ethics, albeit in a different way as suspected by Max Weber. I am addressing these connections through the observation and analysis of local discourses triggered by the vast political and economic changes that Myanmar is currently experiencing. On the ground, these changes have various impacts. For instance, increasing imports from neighboring countries tend to replace more and more locally produced goods. Migration and urbanization as well as other factors, such as newly built garment factories, create difficulties for farmers and small firms to recruit workers. The expansion of technology and growing access to media sources can evoke new desires that result in a change of demand for products. The small businesses in Pathein are affected by such developments to different extents. While they create opportunities in many cases, some business owners are facing serious struggles. This applies especially for workshops that produce handmade goods such as clay works and pottery. In the process of coming to terms with these changing economic conditions, Buddhism plays an important role. Religious obligations, such as pilgrimages and donations can increasingly conflict with other financial demands. Nevertheless religion is regularly mentioned and valued by business owners as a resilient and stabilizing factor, that needs to be maintained in times of changing political and economic realities. Based on ethnographic data from selected case studies of small businesses, I will show how Buddhism provides concepts in which people embed emerging challenges and inequalities and thus influences work ethics as well as concrete economic behaviour.
Building the Land of Buddha: Saintly Entrepreneurialism and Political Aspirations of Theravadin Saints in Mainland Southeast Asia

My paper is concerned with the emergence of Theravadin Khruba Buddhist saints in mainland Southeast Asia, their success in building up a reputation, their saintly status, and their ability to attract people and material support. These living Buddhist Saints conform to the needs of ethnic minorities in the borderlands with Southwest-China as well as elite and wealthy people and thus exercise charisma and religious authority among them.

The paper looks at the rise and position of these saints as community leader in their imagined Buddhist communities and self-proclaimed land of the border, criss-crossing modern state borders.

In addition, it looks at the emergence of new pilgrimage routes, the building of monuments and pilgrimage centres, and the association of the saints with sacral kingship. It is not the first time that charismatic holy monks emerge as community leaders in local society and it will not be the last time. The aim of my paper is to assess the reasons for this re-vitalization, the memory of Buddhist kingship and former saints, and the millenarian desire for a future Buddha in modern times. The paper also explores the articulation of these saints with modern economy and state power, and the reciprocity and redistribution of wealth within their communities.
MONASTIC ECONOMIC POLICIES IN PRE-MODERN TIBET: PRECEDENTS FOR THE PRESENT?

There exists considerable misconception on the economic systems of Buddhist monastic institutions. In particular, in studies that deal with the current state of monasteries in Tibetan areas a historical notions abound. In describing the processes in which contemporary monasteries try to find ‘alternative’ ways of managing financial matters, such as tourism, state funding or shopkeeping, a comment regularly made is that in the olden days monks did not have to resort to such methods. Upon closer examination, however, it becomes apparent that historically monasteries did not always supported monks in their livelihood. We know this from oral accounts of monks who lived in various Tibetan areas before the 1950s. But this is also attested by both very early and rather late Tibetan texts. Furthermore, business and other money-making enterprises were commonplace in Tibetan monastic institutions, indicating that the ways in which Tibetan monasteries make ends meet in exile and in China nowadays are not as modern as we are sometimes led to believe. This paper deals with how monks and monasteries in traditional Tibet managed their economies, as portrayed in monastic guidelines (bca’ yig) and various oral sources. It discusses the various ways in which Buddhist thinking is employed in justifying certain economic regulations. It also investigates the numerous economic policies in place for individual monks vis à vis those for the monastic governing bodies. In this paper, I demonstrate that the rules concerning economic and business activity for the individual monks were rather different than the rules for the monasteries as institutions. Aside from pointing out that monasteries nowadays operate in very similar ways, I also argue that while these policies often served a practical purpose, the reasoning
behind them can be ultimately traced back to ideas found in Vinaya materials.

Jerryson, Michael  
Associate Professor in Religious Studies, Youngstown State University

MARKETING THE BUDDHA AND ITS BLASPHEMY
Off one of Bangkok’s busy streets is a winding road bedecked with businesses, condominiums, a Christian Church, and near its end, the School of Life. It is here that one can find the base of operations for the Knowing Buddha Organization. Only four years old, the KBO boasts over 5,000 members and has effectively launched campaigns to protect Buddha images in France, Germany, the Netherlands, the United States and Thailand. KBO is the brainchild of a young Thai entrepreneur turned meditation master, Acharavadee Wongsakon.

Since its inception, the organization has successfully coordinated 100 cases to protect Buddha images worldwide. Many of the KBO’s campaigns have been quite successful. Buddha images on toilet lids were removed in France, seductive poses in front of Buddha images in Maxim magazine were cancelled. In 2013, the Dutch company Boels created Buddha image toilet boxes in Brunssum, Netherlands. KBO wrote to the embassy on January 25, 2013, requesting that the government take action. The Netherlands responded immediately; they ordered a removal of the toilet boxes and followed with an apology letter on February 15, 2013.

KBO considers these problems the result of a general ignorance about Buddhism. In a world of mass commercialization that transforms Buddha heads into flower pots, the KBO acts as a transnational censor. Acharavadee sees Thailand integral to the larger global problem of disrespecting Buddha images. While most Thais do not disrespect the images, they mass produce and sell these images to foreigners, who take them abroad and use them for various
commercial interests. One of the ways to combat this problem has been through protesting the manufacturing of Buddha heads.

Acharavadee has channeled her entrepreneurial skills and business tactics into artistically powerful productions of the KBO website, Facebook page, LCD displays, billboards, DVDs and booklets. Her efforts have not gone unrewarded. There is wide support of the KBO; in addition to its growing number of members, the organization receives significant contributions from local and national Thai businesses. KBO is comprised largely of educated Thais, the majority of which are female. Their wide membership also attracts local Thais who occasionally join in their marches, such as the annual protest down the famous backpacker streets of Khao Sarn Road. They post brochures in tourist favorite Grand Palace and have submitted a video campaign for Thai Airways.

The majority of scholarship on Buddhism and globalization track the ways in which Buddhists use technologies to enhance the dissemination of the dhamma and the growth of Buddhist transnational organizations. While globalization provides promises, it also provides problems. In Thailand, Acharavadee’s Knowing Buddha Organization seeks to redress the global commercialization of the Buddha image, which they consider a desecration of the sacred. This paper examines the methods in which the Knowing Buddha Organization (KBO) engages in the consumerism of Buddha images internationally and on a national level. This paper draws upon ethnographic work with KBO practitioners and organizers and locates their efforts in the larger discourse on Buddhism and blasphemy.
“A HUNGRY BURYAT DOESN’T THINK OF BUDDHA”: SANGHA AND BUDDHIST EXCHANGE IN POST-SOVIET BURYATIA

Some lamas strive towards being an ascetic practitioner; others seek to support laity in spiritual matters. Yet others follow the ideal of a socially and politically involved leader of a lay community focusing on affairs that are usually deemed as outside of religious realm. While these ideals coexist in Buryatia, the latter one has come to dominate the Buddhist landscape in the post-Soviet period.

The Soviet regime and a difficult transition to market economy has had a devastating effect on the region. In the religious realm, not only Soviet anti-religious policies, but also a depressive socio-economic situation today have had an effect on Buddhism. In these conditions, as many locals observe, Buddhism has taken on a particularly "practical" and "utilitarian" form where the laity seeks astrological and ritual advice in a wide range of situations and counts on "support from above". Meanwhile, laypeople and lamas comment that this is a faulted, incomplete version of Buddhism. While this discourse of Buddhist decline idealizes the past, Buddhist practice among the Buryats has indeed changed due to urbanization. Many urban temples have been built in the post-Soviet period as Buryats moved to the city, and these are more focused on quick drop-in lay consultations and are easily accessible thus encouraging frequent visits. Lamas therefore play a significant role in Buryatia today of mediators and advisors in current socially and economically turbulent times: low wages, joblessness, rise of crime, etc.

Another significant impact of the Soviet period is related to anti-clerical discourse. Lamas were portrayed as greedy and exploitative then, and this discourse remains vivid today; laypeople often point to the supposed riches of the sangha and question their motivation.
Meanwhile the sangha conceptualizes itself as redeeming the Buryats in the current socio-economic situation. Indeed, the dominant Buddhist institution – Traditional Sangha of Russia – has championed support to rural Buryat communities as its priority, and its leader is better known locally as a good manager than a pious Buddhist. According to him a good lama must primarily be close to his people, serving the needs of the community; some of his main projects include support to livestock farmers. This not only hints towards socialist ideals and rebukes clergy-as-exploitative claims, but also adds a layer of practical, feasible support to Buryat communities. Importantly, a material, pragmatic level is significant here in the exchange between sangha and laity.

While this exchange is often conceptualized with laity as the giver of material support and sangha as the receiver of material aid and the giver of ritual/merit, this would be an incomplete view in the Buryat case. I shall argue that in post-Soviet Burayatia, Buddhist exchange is more complex with somewhat subverted roles of donor and receiver.

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PROFITING FOR THE BENEFIT OF OTHERS - RITA IN THE MANAGEMENT PHILOSOPHY AND PRAXIS OF INAMORI KAZUO

Inamori Kazuo is presently the most recognisable Japanese entrepreneur and manager. Founder of Kyocera and telecommunications leader KDDI, he became more known abroad due to the "miraculous" recovery of Japanese Airlines (JAL), the Japanese flag carrier, which went bankrupt in February 2010. Inamori, who became the company president, managed to reinvigorate the company, implement some decisive restructuring steps and return
victoriously with JAL to Tokyo Stock Exchange in September 2012, only after two and a half years. In his companies Inamori worked out an original management system, known as “Amoeba Management”, in which company teams and departments work as highly independent quasicompanies. The glue, that stick together these is company philosophy, which role is to provide employees with common set of values. Among these Inamori, himself a devoted Buddhist (temporarily in his 70s also a Zen monk), defines Japanese rita (Sanskrit parârtha) as the fundamental one, providing both the management and the employees with the correct perspective of their mutual relations and the true purpose of their work. Such a vision of management is not secluded to companies founded and run by Inamori himself. As a prolific writer Inamori discusses it in many of his best selling books, both on management itself as on the general value of “human life”. Inamori has also founded as well Seiwajuku, an association for managers from medium and small companies, now having about 9000 members mainly from Japan and China. Seiwajuku has become a venue for sharing experiences and studying the Rita management of Inamori. In the paper the author analysis both normative texts written by Inamori, with Kyocera Philosophy as the core one, and interviews by Inamori, in order to elucidate the role played by Rita and other Buddhist influences in Inamori’s management.

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MONKS, MONEY AND KINSHIP RELATIONS IN SHANGRILA
This paper seeks to explore the influences of economic changes on relationships between Tibetan Buddhist monks and their kin. While economic support of monks provided by their natal households is common in most Tibetan Buddhist areas, there is a trend in Shangrila of economic support moving the other way. This is considered to be
both exceptional and problematic by members of both the laity and the sangha.

Ever since its renaming in 2001, Shangrila (former Zhongdian), located in the southwestern Chinese province of Yunnan, has undergone a significant transformation from a rather sleepy, predominantly Tibetan agricultural town into one of China's most popular domestic tourism destinations, the urban and economic centre of the area. Due to these developments the largest regional monastery, Ganden Songtsenling, originally located 5 km outside the old town centre, not only became integrated into the growing city both spatially and economically. As economic opportunities in the area have increased, monks have found it easy to engage in business ventures in the area capitalizing on low-interest loans from the monastery, and their reputation as being trustworthy. While different opinions exist to what extent this is morally justifiable, a main point of critique by both members of the laity and the sangha questions not necessarily the earning of an external income by monks, but rather the lifestyle of local monks that is considered to increasingly resemble that of the laity. Complaints frequently address an absence of monastic rules that would otherwise prohibit monks from owning and driving cars, or spending their time in bars and cafés in town.

Disapproval is also voiced of the increasingly close relationship between monks and their natal households. The relationship between monks and their kin has transformed in its nature, partly due to improved infrastructure which allows for more frequent visits to the countryside, where most monks originate from. While monks have traditionally been dependent on their kin for money and other goods, their proximity to such an urban and economic centre has increasingly put monks in a position to make money, and therefore has become a significant means of economic support for their rural natal households. While accepting help from related monks is widely considered to bring bad karma on the family, it is also acquiesced to,
as it is perceived as a result of recent socioeconomic change that cannot be halted.

This paper, based on my ongoing PhD fieldwork, will try to expand common understandings of this economic exchange between the laity and the sangha. I will investigate the ways in which the growing integration into the market-economy, and the transformation of the monastic environment creates not only new opportunities but also new roles and responsibilities for Tibetan Buddhist monks in contemporary China. In addition, I will seek to explore the various perceptions of monk-family relations and how they might be explained and justified in religious terms.

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TOURISM AND RELIGION: AN UNDERSTANDING OF AUTHENTICITY AND COMMODIFICATION OF MONASTIC CULTURE IN LADAKH (INDIA)

This paper is an attempt to understand and conceptualize tourism and Buddhist monastic culture in transition from a sociological perspective. It seeks to explore the relationship between tourism, religion, culture and ethnic identity in Ladakh, located in the northernmost state of India. This paper shows how Buddhist monastic culture are being reconstructed and packaged for tourist consumption and the ways in which tourism might be linked to the reassertion of ethnic identity. It goes on to examine the spatial re-imagining provoked by the development of tourism, and asks whether this tourist destination inevitability becomes a ‘pseudo-community’ for the visitors.

The key questions raised in this study are related to the issue of authenticity and commodification. How is place made ‘real’ in
contemporary Ladakh? Does tourism result in deterioration of ‘religious/cultural meaning’ and produce ‘pseudo-communities’?

Viewing the spatial as socially constructed and place-making as vital to social organization, this is a study of how sacred space is constructed and contested. It describes how local villagers and monastic elites have negotiated the area’s religious geography, and how tourism developers are now engaged in marketing Buddhism as a symbolic resource to lure tourism industry stakeholders for enhancing local economy. Overall my paper is an insightful account of the complex links between tourism, culture, economy and Ladakhi identity.

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SPIRITUAL CAPITAL AND MONEY MAKING: A CASE STUDY BASE ON LARONG MONASTERY BUDDHIST INSTITUTE IN SEDA COUNTY

This paper examines how the spiritual capital of Buddhism has been employed to increase potential income in Tibetan Monasteries. Based on one local case study, it focuses on the spiritual capital factors that influence Tibetan monastery increase income in one particular case of a monastery development process in masses of Sichuan ,Qinghai and Gansu, in the TAR’s East. The paper is based on the author’s investigation of the Larong Monastery Buddhist Institute in Seda County,which growing very fast ,only tens of Duddhist in 1980s and thousands of Buddhisrt currently,and author was told that only a Kampo Sauder might received one million RBM per day. This setup raises multiple question, such as: How is the process of the monastery making money organized? How do the multiple stakeholders involved shape spiritual capital? how the spiritual capital of Buddhism has been employed? Based on the premise that spiritual
capital constitutes an effective way to increase income, the paper argues that spiritual capital can give strong impacts on money making, and that a better understanding of the spiritual capital needs detailed analysis of local case studies such as arong Monastery Buddhist Institute in Seda County. In this sense, this paper also discusses the challenges in government’s management over monastery development via state law and recommendations for it.

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THE SOKA GAKKAI ECONOMY: A BOTTOM-UP PERSPECTIVE ON CYCLES OF EXCHANGE THAT PROPEL JAPAN’S LARGEST NEW RELIGION

Soka Gakkai, literally the “Value Creation Study Association,” expanded dramatically from a few thousand adherents in the early 1950s to millions of followers by the 1970s. Today, this lay Nichiren Buddhism-based organization claims 8.27 million households in Japan and close to two million adherents in 192 other countries, making it Japan’s largest new religious movement and arguably Japan’s most successful religious export.

In the course of its expansion, Soka Gakkai also grew into an economic powerhouse. Every year, millions of Gakkai adherents regularly contribute the equivalent of many billions of yen’s worth of money and material goods as part of a donation practice the organization calls zaimu, or “finances.” Soka Gakkai also maintains a wide range of business interests. These center on a massive publishing empire rooted in the daily newspaper Seikyō shinbun (~5.5 copies daily) that includes numerous other media producers. Soka Gakkai also reportedly oversees vast interests in finance, real estate, and a host of other industries. Estimates of Soka Gakkai’s holdings vary between
US$100 and $200 billion, making it one of Japan’s most significant economic entities of any sort.

Considerable controversy surrounds Soka Gakkai. Due to an overwhelmingly negative public image generated by a history of aggressive proselytizing, a rejection of other faiths as heterodox, and charismatic leadership centered on its Honorary President Ikeda Daisaku (1928- ), Soka Gakkai has remained under-researched. The religion’s economic activities have generated particularly intense critiques. As a “religious juridical person” (shūkyō hōjin), Soka Gakkai enjoys considerable tax breaks, and as the founder and continuing supporter of the influential political party Komeito, which forms part of Japan’s governing coalition, scrutiny of the religion’s finances has been rendered particularly challenging.

To date, most inquiry into the money side of Soka Gakkai has taken the form of tell-all exposés that focus on its leadership and macro-level investigations into its financial dealings. Recent revelations that the Panama Papers include an entity called “Soka Gakkai, Inc.” comprise the latest chapter in decades of reportage on scandals that embroil Soka Gakkai leaders, Komeito and other political actors, and a host of other interconnected powerholders. While there is an allure to these reports, they do little to answer fundamental questions about how and why generations of grassroots-level adherents continue to contribute to Soka Gakkai’s formidable wealth.

In this paper, I shall draw on more than a decade and a half spent as a non-member participant observer of local-level Soka Gakkai communities in Japan to shed light on the cycles of exchange that propel the religion’s economic engine. I shall provide case studies of how soliciting subscriptions for the Seikyō shinbun, performing pilgrimages to Gakkai headquarters at Shinanomachi in Tokyo, and a host of other quotidian activities have come to be conceived within Soka Gakkai as Buddhist practices, and how they combine to generate Soka Gakkai’s tremendous economic power. Through these case studies, I shall provide insight into ways cultivation in Soka Gakkai’s
distinctive ethos motivates members’ material investments, and I shall consider the types of capital that they receive in return – social, spiritual, and also material – to trace the contours of the Gakkai’s internal economic exchange cycle. Finally, I shall consider the future of Soka Gakkai’s economic might in light of demographic change, its precarious reliance on print culture, and its dependence on the authority of a charismatic leader whose life is coming to an end.

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SINGAPORE’S SPIRITUAL CATERERS AND THE NATIONAL IMAGINARY: TECHNOLOGIES FOR THE ASPIRATIONAL CITIZENS

Through its social engineering agenda, Singapore has been in a constant state of ‘becoming’ since declaring independence. A national narrative of ‘survival’ imagines the city-state in ongoing competition with other global cities in the region. Thus, notions of meritocracy and effort are infused into a community and at the same time providers appear (e.g. cram schools or seminars that help to increase individual skills) to address the need to position oneself into these powerful imaginative dimensions. Far more being simply about economic capital, they serve as a technique for participation in citizenship, both for its actual and its aspirational members. This imaginary is crucial as a marker of identity, serving as an important reference for one’s social capital, success and belonging to the nation itself.

There are multiple ways to participate in this imaginative pool. One strategy actors adopt can be found in what Peter Jackson (1999) calls “prosperity religion”. This concept blends Buddhist belief and mundane aspirations into a symbolic complex that sacralises the notion of success and effort and offers mostly members of the lower
and middle classes a particular set of technologies to pursue their aspirations. In shopping malls and precincts, we find numerous shop-temples where (so called) Buddhist goods and services are offered, and where Buddhist spiritual caterers compete for the favour of their customers. In these spaces, amulets, Sak Yant (spiritual tattoos), blessings, and fortune telling offer religious customers the opportunity to enhance their individual potential. These techniques of “boosting” personality articulate Buddhist virtue and understanding with the customer’s contemporary, mundane objectives: social and economic success and belonging. In this on-going process of blending Buddhist ideas with economic principles a dynamic field of interaction emerges that shows the mutual relationship between Buddhism and economy. According to Jackson we can find a field that shows a mystification of the market and an economization of Buddhism.

In my contribution, I want to focus on shops that apply a specific articulation of Buddhism to this-worldly projects and aspirations. These laity-run spaces show that in a context of economic interaction, Buddhism is used in terms of efficacy and transports significance by (otherwise secular) daily actions at the same time.

Based on ethnographic fieldwork carried out in Singapore in 2015, I contextualize those shops within a broader public discourse of meritocracy, focusing on how and why the technologies they offer become so attractive to potential customers. This case study also demonstrates how actors articulate Buddhist conceptions in contemporary Singapore, drawing attention to the widely overlooked importance of religion in contemporary Southeast Asian megacities.
THE INTERFACE OF RELIGION, ECONOMY, AND POLITICS IN AMDO

This essay explores the interface of religion, wealth, and community in seventeenth and eighteenth Amdo, northeast Tibet, now parts of Qinghai, Gansu, and Sichuan. The paper opens with remarks about Amdo historical and cultural contexts and continues with an Amdo case study. The paper will close with remarks about modern changes in Amdo.

The northeastern Tibetan communities can be understood as clusters of local nomads and as time went on, farmers. The proximity between the borders of Tibetan Amdo and many Inner Asian civilizations along the Silk Roads—especially here China, Mongolia, Tangut, and Turkic—resulted in both mixed, inter-ethnic regions and also pockets of quite unmixed, separated, distinct communities. This close proximity offered opportunities for trade, for conflicts, and the transmissions of knowledge. The very location of Amdo made the exchange of goods and ideas a regular and profitable local process. A.D. Smith has noted that in such border communities, different peoples will often assert their distinctive ethnic identifiers, religion, language, culture, inner political authority. In this perspective, Amdo has been predominantly Buddhist at all levels, in a kind of “intersubjectivity” with their neighbors.

The paper shows that Buddhism is in general supportive of acquiring moderate wealth, in their understanding a necessary convention, but with no intrinsic, unchanging reality. Monasteries, and networks of monasteries provided locations for community gatherings, trade, for affirmation of Buddhist worldviews, where people acted in Wiltermuth & Heath’s “synchrony” that uses “religious rituals to strengthen group cohesion.” It is this cohesion that
produced over 2000 monasteries in full regalia in the late seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. Kapstein, in the context of entire Tibet, Rawski, on the Qing Dynasty, and others have mentioned the political forces that stimulated the proliferation of these new Tibetan Buddhist monasteries in Amdo and adjoining regions. Their work serves in part to contextualize the present study of Amdo as a major center of Buddhist learning and prosperity. The new religious centers fulfilled the need for religious observance and support, mediation of disputes, and not the least, markets.

The paper method relies on field research and available documents in Tibetan and Chinese, and will draw tentative conclusions from this data. Consistent with the conference themes, it will focus on Labrang Monastery and its corporate estate, a place where “merchants and monks, wealth and virtue” interface. The analysis will ‘juxtapose the three conference concepts – materiality, value, exchange – in order to clarify the mediating role of Buddhism in business activities.”

The essay will analyze the exchanges of religious meaning and material goods and services, with examples of commodities becoming endowed with value and meaning. The primary trade goods in the Labrang community included livestock products, especially wool, agricultural produce (barley), imported goods, lumber, and corvée. The fundamental value and subsequent exchange of these goods served as a method for the accumulation of religious merit and membership in the community. As a result, in Amdo, the Buddhist institution, its leaders, and even individual monks grew wealthy and powerful. The paper will conclude with remarks about changes in religion, society, and economy in modern Amdo.
BETWEEN OPENNESS AND ACCOMMODATION: THE AGENCY OF BUDDHIST MONKS IN THAILAND’S TOURISM LANDSCAPE

Spaces where international tourists and Buddhist monks interact illustrate how Buddhism can be constructed in global contexts. Focusing on an ethnographic case study in Northern Thailand, this paper argues that tourism is not altering Buddhism; instead Buddhist monks are creatively engaging this new audience, revealing their agency within transnational settings. Buddhist monks residing in temples popular with tourists are taking full advantage of their location and the positive image of Buddhism internationally. Other Buddhist leaders bring tourists to their temples through special temple stay or volunteering programs. At the same time, Buddhist monks engaged in these interactions have rules in place so that foreigners can participate only if they are sincere and genuinely interested. This paper reveals Buddhist monks’ open attitudes towards tourists while not totally accommodating them. Focusing on the agency of monks I offer a post-colonial analysis of contemporary Buddhist engagement with tourism. Instead of resisting or totally accommodating outside forces such as tourism or globalization, I argue that Buddhists engage modernity on their own terms. It must be acknowledged that there is a neo-imperialist presence within these programs as English is the language that must be learned to communicate with any kind of impact or power. However, it is clear that monks are agents over these programs. These programs demonstrate Theravada Buddhist actors in Northern Thailand are taking full advantage of tourism and the positive image of Buddhism internationally. These programs are open to tourists but not totally accommodating them. Instead of resistance or totally accommodating outside forces such as tourism or
globalization, Buddhists engage modernity on their own terms. This research demonstrates how interaction with tourists does not lead to a decrease in value, as is typically assumed, but creates opportunities for religious and cultural others to interact, highlighting the openness of Thai Buddhist communities to those who show curiosity and interest in their religion. From a Theravada Buddhist perspective, the main value of such encounters is the ability to spread the dhamma, or teachings of Buddhism.

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CATERPILLAR FUNGUS AND THE ECONOMY OF SINNING. HOW TIBETAN BUDDHIST COPE WITH ‘STAINED’ MONEY FROM THE CATERPILLAR FUNGUS BOOM

This paper takes a look at the economic boom in trade in an expensive medicinal resource called caterpillar fungus. Since the early 2000s, populations on the Tibetan plateau, where this fungus is endemic, engaged in this trade, earning incomes unrecorded in their history. They raised their standard of life, undertook investments and accumulated savings. However, the income from caterpillar fungus is not ‘cost-free’. In order to earn it, people transgress religious prescriptions creating wealth that is materially attractive but morally ‘stained’.

This paper shows a Tibetan rural society in a region which is largely if not entirely dependent on such income. It analyzes consequences of this reliance and asks what risks do Tibetan Buddhists associate with this income and how do they explain them. In what ways do they try to minimize these risks and how do they ‘cleanse’ themselves and their income of its problematic status. This paper offers a look into practices by which Tibetans handle this
situation and avoid ‘paranoia of guilt’ as well as a role of Buddhist professionals in this process.

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ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND MERIT ACCUMULATION: RECENT CHANGES IN TIBETAN PRE-DEATH RITUAL (GSON CHOS) IN GLING RGYA VILLAGE, REB GONG

Economy admittedly plays important roles to religious practice as economic development may affect various changes in the performance of rituals. The focus of the proposed paper is the entanglement between the practice of pre-death ritual (gson chos) and economic development in Gling rgya village in Reb gong. In my paper, I will in particular disentangle two developments involving economy and religious ritual: (1) that of the economic motivations but also problems behind the ritual, and (2) the connection between economic growth and the transformation of the ritual practice itself.

The tradition of pre-death ritual is only found in some of the villages in Reb gong, Amdo, and is performed for the elderly, who are in their late sixties or seventies. The ritual is one of the biggest and most important rituals that are practiced for individuals in Gling rgya village. The pre-death ritual consists of four to five days of large feastings and scripture recitations. Each day there is a new feast, which requires more people in the village to participate in both assistance and consumption. On one hand, by means of food charities and religious chanting the ritual is performed in order to accumulate merit for the elderly person. Merit accumulation serves as a comfort for the elderly in that it can decrease the fear of death and serve as a preparation for the next life. On the other hand, unexpected deaths and great funeral expenditures are a burden on impoverished families,
who are unable to afford after-death rituals. If they have already had pre-death rituals performed, ideally they do not have to spend large amounts on a later funeral. My research has disclosed big differences in expenses between the general funerals and the funerals with pre-death rituals in advance, and we can therefore say that the ritual serves as a preparation for funerals and as a prevention for financial problems of the family when a death occurs. Traditional customs in Tibetan cultural areas of mTshosngon Province in China have been changing dramatically due to economic, educational, social and cultural factors. This pre-death ritual tradition is not an exception. Traditional customs are affected by, and adapted to, the social and cultural changes that have taken place since 1980. Many elements of the pre-death ritual have changed, including its reason and meaning.

In my paper, I will discuss in-depth the economic growth of the community and its effect on ongoing changes in performing the ritual. I will argue that the transformations, which my research has revealed, are connected to economic growth and modernization: the ritual itself has undergone a form of secularization, and furthermore; the expense of the ritual has increased to such an extent that it has become a huge financial challenge for some families. In fact, it has become competitive among some families to increase ritual expenses, which in consequence has also increased the conflict potential: While some village groups have recognized the need to establish rules to limit the increase of expenses, certain families, mostly the wealthy, resist such rules. This is a part of my PhD project at the University Oslo which mainly focuses on religious beliefs and practices related to Tibetan pre-death ritual in Gling rgya village in Reb gong. My research extends to include how and why pre-death ritual is practiced, the influences of the ritual on practitioners, and how pre-death ritual practices and perspectives among the performers are being transformed by contemporary social and economic changes. My research grounds on empirical data collected through my nine months of fieldwork in Reb gong, complemented with the study of relevant
textual material. Interview, participant observation, and visual documents are implied as the main research methods.

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**THE SPECTACLE OF BUDDHIST FESTIVALS IN LEH, LADAKH: THE INTERSECTION OF BUDDHISM AND TOURISM AND THE REINVENTION OF BUDDHIST RITUALS**

Since the Northwest Indian Himalayan region of Ladakh opened its doors to tourism in the mid-1970s, visitors have been flocking the region to witness the awe-inspiring mountainous landscape and gain access what is often referred to as ‘Little Tibet’ or the ‘last remaining bastion of Tibetan Buddhism.’ The prominent monasteries in the Buddhist region of Leh have since witnessed a flood of visitors every year- including an increasing number of domestic tourists interested in local cultural tours, as well as foreign tourists who tend to be more interested in Buddhism, many of whom are on Buddhist pilgrimage. Moreover, the annual ‘monastery festivals’ at each monastery where the colorful *cham*, or mask dances, are performed, are now advertised widely- both nationally and internationally- in order to draw an increasing number of tourists to the region. In September 2016, the *naro gyen-druk* or the ‘Naropa festival’ was the most widely marketed festival in Ladakh and coined the ‘kumbh mela of the Himalayas’ or the ‘largest Buddhist festival in Ladakh’. The festival which takes place every 12 years entails the revealing of the sacred six bone ornaments of Naropa, an 11th century Buddhist saint, with 2016 marking the millennial anniversary. Based on ethnographic research and participation in this recent event, I argue that this festival marks a major transformation in the way in which Buddhist festivals are held
in Ladakh, possibly impacting Buddhist festivals in the Himalayan region and beyond. The festival is said to have drawn over 100,000 participants, mostly from Ladakh, but also large numbers of pilgrims from the wider Himalayan region including Bhutan and Nepal, pilgrims from East and Southeast Asia, as well as from Europe and the Americas. Not only did the festival include the more traditional elements of revealing the sacred bone ornaments which are said to cause ‘liberation through sight’, a tantric empowerment of Chakrasamvara, and teachings by the Gyalwang Drukpa Rinpoche, considered to be a reincarnation of Naropa and head of the Drukpa Kagyu sect of Tibetan Buddhism, but also a 6-day cultural program and evening entertainment including performances by the Kung-Fu nuns, celebrated Bollywood stars, a magic show, fashion show and light show. Drawing heavily on the donations received mostly from the recent spread of the Drukpa lineage to East and Southeast Asia, as well as the significant registration fees for international participants, the festival and all of its glory was understood to be an offering to Naropa, a celebration of Buddhism, and a means to spread and secure the teachings of the Buddha worldwide for lifetimes to come. The spectacle of Buddhist festivals such as this thus challenges academic considerations of the role of religion in contemporary society as that which is or should be apart from business and the market economy, entertainment and spectacle. The marketization, commodification and mediatization of this event, while often criticized as lessening the importance or value of religion, were in this case means to enact a reinvention as well as maintenance of this spectacular traditional Buddhist ritual in Ladakh.
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**TRANSFORMED “HUMANISTIC BUDDHISM” FROM 1900S-2000S, AN ECONOMIC POLITICAL ANALYSIS FROM TAIXU TO HSINGYUN**

Under the debate of secularism and modernization, it is momentous to reexamine Buddhism’s relation with the mundane world as religious renaissance worldwide like humanistic Buddhism is not regarded as a sole phenomenon. Tracing virtue of Chinese Buddhism and ethics, humanistic Buddhism’s perception on business and monastic economy supplements the vacuum of study on how it positions itself in a materialism and modernized society. As Taixu’s proactive action to disseminate revolution of “Buddhism dogmata/teaching, sangha, property”, he valued the temple as a property of common wealth and should be self-substantiated, for charity and education. While Hsing Yun succeeded and carried forward Taixu’s version globally, humanistic Buddhism was ambiguous to reject attribution and disapproved personalized relation with disciples and regards property as the righteous way to promote philanthropy. Their standpoint resembled the mission to revive Buddhism in a shaky and unstable economic and political state, which experienced a century of chaos of imperial collapse, foreign invasion, constant military civil war. Thus, only combined economic and historical perspective can we inspect the role of Buddhism in the capitalized reality. In decades, Taixu actively engaged in political issue and mobilized sangha to uptake responsibility of public salvation to rescue the nation and economy from ruination. His claim derived not solely from his interpretation of sutra, but also his experience in the national crisis, and connection with politics in enlightenment. Consequently, I argue that his failure could not be considered as individual powerlessness and weakness, rather it root in unfavorable
dilemma where transforming Buddhism is merely impossible. Humanistic Buddhism, as a whole, declined since Taixu’s death and when the communist party came into power. His economic reform partially persisted through disciples in Taiwan. For instance, Hsing Yun pursued Humanistic Buddhism in a relatively supportive surrounding, where he founded Foguangshan, Buddha’s Light International Association, library, university and then popularized them worldwide. The transformation for him was to integrate Buddhism with localization, traditional ethics and Confucianism to put into practice. The essence of Taixu’s revolution transcended in Hsing Yun’s theology: secular teaching/dogmata for public, sangha system, and public welfare. Although Hsing Yun did not systematically formulate monastic economy and property management rule, basic principles dispersed in his teaching still demonstrates his endeavor to detach personal connection, while maintain cling to lay Buddhist and believers. Especially on property management and donation from worshipers, he insisted public ownership and charitable purpose. Given the scarce empirical research on modern monastic economy, this paper argues the theoretical legacy of humanistic Buddhism is a fundamental dimension to examine the relation between Buddhism and worldly capitalism. Conditionally, its impact on general sangha’s well behave is further questionable.
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