

Conférences du CEIB et de l'EFEO

Mercredi 6 décembre 2017 à partir de 14h

INALCO, 65 rue des Grands Moulins, 75013 Paris, Salle 3.15

La séance sera animée par
Fabienne Jagou (EFEO)

A Theravada conquest of China? Pan-Asian Buddhism and the Southeast-Asian Model in Modern China

Ester Bianchi, Maître de conférence (HDR) à l'Università degli Studi di Perugia, Italie

Discutant : François Lagirarde, EFEO

At the turn of the nineteenth century, in the wake of Buddhism's addition to the pantheon of the "world religions", the idea of an alleged "original Buddhism" emerged. This was soon to be identified with the Pāli Buddhism of South and South-East Asia, i.e. with the Theravāda tradition.

Chinese Buddhists were also exposed to this new perspective, after centuries when there had not been many – if any – contacts between Chinese and Sinhalese Buddhists. Some Chinese prominent masters and lay people started to espouse the idea whereby the Southeast Asian traditions reflected more than any other Buddhist form the "original teaching" of the Buddha and, more precisely, that the "original" Indian Buddhist vinaya had been best preserved by Theravāda monasticism.

To what extent and depth was the Chinese saṃgha affected by the Theravāda model in terms of rules of conduct and ritual procedures? The present lecture aims to probe into the impact of these modern ideas on the subsequent developments of Chinese Buddhism, mainly focusing on the vinaya.

Tibetan-Tangut Buddhist Encounters through the Patronage of Tangut Rulers

Carmen Meinert, professeur à la Ruhr-Universität Bochum, Allemagne
coordinatrice du projet ERC « Dynamics in Buddhist Networks in Eastern Central Asia 6th-14th Centuries (Buddhist Road) »

Discutant : Matthew Kapstein, EPHE

The Tangut Empire (11th to 13th centuries) was the last Buddhist stronghold in Eastern Central Asia thanks to generous imperial support. A unique feature of this patronage system was its dual orientation, favoring Sinitic as well as Tibetan Buddhist traditions nowadays still documented in manuscripts collections, paintings and murals from various Central Asian oases and garrisons. The interest of Tangut rulers in Tibetan Tantric Buddhism is particularly striking from around the 1130s until the Mongolian conquest in the 1220s. Within this time span Tibetan teachers were residing at the Tangut court, translations from Tibetan into Tangut and Chinese were prepared e.g. of ritual manual and Buddhist art of a Tantric pantheon was produced on banners and on walls at cave sites. I suggest to closely read textual and visual materials of this period and from various locations together, in order to get a clearer picture of the dynamics of intercultural exchange, and production and dissemination of Tantric Buddhist knowledge.