



Buddhism, business and economic relations - in Asia and beyond

BBB Copenhagen Conference

12-14 October 2016



CALL FOR PAPERS

Buddhism, as with all other religions, has always necessarily been deeply embedded within not only economic, but political and social spheres in the various contexts in which Buddhism has taken root. In order for a Buddhist monk to be able to become disengaged with the material world, he must have an economic basis from which he gains sustenance. At the same time, Buddhist monasteries in Asia have historically been large economic centres owning great plots of land and occupying a central position along regional trade routes. Yet the economic entanglements that Buddhists have historically had often becomes overshadowed by text-based studies which focus on the soteriological aim of going beyond and becoming released from this-worldly engagements. Furthermore, the complex relationship between religion and economics often raises ambiguous and contentious sentiments. Take, for example, the wealth displayed at Buddhist monasteries and the luxury items used by Buddhist masters. While these signifiers of wealth arise awe in many and disgust in some, common perceptions of Buddhism as an anti-materialistic and austere religion reveals the ambiguous relationship that Buddhism and business have had – both in historical and contemporary practices.

At this interdisciplinary, three-day conference, we will inquire into this complex relationship and ideological juxtapositions that lie within the nexus of Buddhism and economic activity in various historical and contemporary contexts in Asia and beyond. We seek to address the many ways in which Buddhism – as not only a religion, but also an identification, a tradition or culture, a source of values, morals and ethics, a world-view or way of life, and as a philosophy, science, even secularism – have been engaged in economic relations in both clerical and lay communities.

WE INVITE INDIVIDUAL PAPERS

We invite individual papers that explore the diverse modalities of Buddhism and economic relations in Asia and beyond. Suggestions for topics may include: how Buddhists have

positioned themselves in relation to a capitalistic market economy, both as a critique and as an engagement; how monasteries have engaged in business practices; how Buddhist technologies are utilized in the corporate world; how Buddhist-related items have been bought and sold in the marketplace; and how the spiritual capital of Buddhism has been employed to increase potential income.

TIME AND VENUE

The conference will be held on held on 12-14 October 2016 at the University of Copenhagen, Denmark.

KEYNOTE SPEAKERS

Dr. Lionel Obadia, Professor in Anthropology, Université Lyon

Dr. Juliane Schober, Professor of Religious Studies and Director of the Center for Asian Research, Arizona State University

Dr. Dan Smyer-Yü, Professor and Founding Director Center for Trans-Himalayan Studies, Yunnan Minzu University

DEADLINE

Those interested in contributing with an individual paper to this conference are asked to send a paper abstract of max 500 words to ccbs@hum.ku.dk no later than the 15th of May 2016.

Please include your name, institution and position.

Papers will be selected by the 15th of June 2016. Researchers and students who wish to attend the conference without presenting a paper, are requested to register by the 15th of September 2016.

INFORMATION

The conference is hosted by the Center for Contemporary Buddhist Studies at the Department of Cross-Cultural and Regional Studies and the international collaborative research project Buddhism, Business and Believers (BBB) in collaboration with the Asian Dynamics Initiative, a cross-faculty Asia focus at the University of Copenhagen (<http://asiandynamics.ku.dk/>).

The Danish Council for Independent Research has funded the conference.

Please visit our website (<https://centerforcontemporarybuddhiststudies.wordpress.com/>) and add us on Twitter for information and updates: @bbb_studies. Questions regarding practical and logistical issues can be made to the conference coordinators at ccbs@hum.ku.dk.

If you are interested in learning about the BBB-project or would like to become affiliated with the project, please feel free to contact **Trine Brox** [trinebrox@hum.ku.dk] or **Elizabeth Williams-Oerberg** [elizabeth.oerberg@hum.ku.dk].

#bbbcph2016