

Call for Papers

Engaging Buddhism in the West Studies: past, present, future?

Special issue for the journal *Contemporary Buddhism* (forthcoming 2023)

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The description and study of Buddhist expansion, settling, and adaptations in the West has given rise to a substantial body of literature in the last decades. French theologian Henri de Lubac was the first to open the field in 1952, yet academic literature on Buddhism in the West was still scarce in the 1970s and 1980s. The 1990s and 2000s were maybe the more fruitful decades for this multidisciplinary field of knowledge in which many of the key concepts, methods, and theoretical lines have been framed, investigated, and tested. Issues on appeal, diffusion, conversion, acculturation, or modernization are since then “mandatory” themes. The role of Orientalism and Western imagination, the channels, circuits, and dynamics of expansion, the differences between a “white” and an “Asian” Buddhism, the varieties of experiences in and affiliation to different Buddhist historical traditions or more modern movements, the cultural and social transformations on the Buddhist side and in the host societies range among major engendering themes.

More than seventy years after the pioneering works of De Lubac, and four decades after the dawn of this “emerging genre” (to quote Spuler’s seminal article published in 2000), where are we? Questions on globalization, the massive digitalization of societies, the so-called “spiritual revolution,” postcolonial considerations on the moral geographies of the East, and gender issues, offer, among others, avenues for new research to understand the dynamics and reshaping of Buddhism in the Western contexts and equally the transformations of the West irrigated by Buddhism values, beliefs, and practices. It is not only the theoretical horizon that has changed significantly but also the empirical landscape of Buddhist forms and expressions. The aim of this special issue is to welcome original contributions exemplifying new trends, new topics, and new fieldworks dealing with Buddhism in the West (two conceptual categories deserving a critical appraisal) and shedding new light in this field.

This special issue will welcome contributions from young as well as established scholars, in any field of research (Buddhist Studies, religious studies, anthropology, sociology, history, or any other) and in any tradition on the grounds of empirical fieldworks and genuine first-hand ethnographic data or historical information. The papers must focus on the state of the art of research on Buddhism in the West, and ideally propose and discuss genuine theoretical and/or methodological approaches in the field. Please send a full paper following the journal’s guidelines(<https://www.tandfonline.com/action/authorSubmission?show=instructions&journalCode=rdbh20>) by **30th October 2022** with your name and affiliation by email to: lionel.obadia@univ-lyon2.fr; ugo.dessi@univie.ac.at; lukas.pokorny@univie.ac.at. All papers will undergo blind peer-review. **The special issue would be published in 2023.**

For more information, please contact the Journal’s editorial team: Stefania Travagnin, st8@soas.ac.uk; Kate Crosby henrietta.crosby@kcl.ac.uk; and Pyi Phy Kyaw pyi.kyaw@kcl.ac.uk.