

## BuddhistRoad publications: abstracts

**Doney, Lewis, Carmen Meinert, Henrik H. Sørensen, and Yukiyo Kasai, ed. *Buddhism in Central Asia III— Impacts of Non-Buddhist Influences, Doctrines*, Leiden: Brill, 2023.**

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The *BuddhistRoad* project has been creating a new framework to understand the dynamics of cultural encounter and religious transfer across premodern Eastern Central Asia. This framework includes a new focus on the complex interactions between Buddhism and non-Buddhist traditions and a deepening of the traditional focus on Buddhist doctrines between the 6th and 14th centuries, as Buddhism continued to spread along an ancient, local political-economic-cultural system of exchange, often referred to as the Silk Roads. This volume brings together world renowned experts to discuss these issues including Buddhism and Christianity, Islam, Daoism, Manichaeism, local indigenous traditions, Tantra etc.

**(1) Biran, Michal. “Islamic Expansion into Central Asia and Muslim-Buddhist Encounters.” In *Buddhism in Central Asia III— Impacts of Non-Buddhist Influences, Doctrines*, edited by Lewis Doney, Carmen Meinert, Henrik H. Sørensen, and Yukiyo Kasai, 13–64. Leiden: Brill, 2023.**

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### **Abstract:**

The study reviews Islamic expansion into Central Asia (from eastern Iran to Gansu in north-west China) from the seventh to the 16th century, highlighting Muslim-Buddhist encounters. It first discusses an initial period of Islamic imperial military expansion into Central Asia, where Buddhism was only one, rather marginal, religion practiced among the sedentary population met by the conquerors. It then argues that further Muslim expansion into Central Asia from the late 10th century onwards was mainly due the Islamisation of nomadic or post-nomadic collectives who had adopted Islam primarily to acquire communal identity and legitimation. Around the same time, other nomadic and semi-nomadic groups in East and Central Asia adopted Buddhism as part of their state formation, for similar reasons. These Muslim and Buddhist polities were connected by trade and sometimes also marital and political alliances, but there is hardly any evidence for meaningful intellectual contacts prior to the Mongol conquest. The Mongol period (13th–14th centuries) not only resulted in a huge expansion of Islam, it also brought Islam and Buddhism under one rule and invigorated Muslim-Buddhist intellectual exchange. Under Mongol rule, Muslims and Buddhists became the major competitors for converting the Mongols, a process which eventually led to the division of the steppe between Islam and Tibetan Buddhism.

**(2) Loukota, Diego. “Witch Women and Amorous Monkeys: Non-Buddhist Substrata in Khotanese Religion.” In *Buddhism in Central Asia III— Impacts of Non-Buddhist Influences, Doctrines*, edited by Lewis Doney, Carmen Meinert, Henrik H. Sørensen, and Yukiyo Kasai, 65–89. Leiden: Brill, 2023.**

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### **Abstract:**

This paper surveys the evidence of the non-Buddhist religious traditions that underlie the dominantly Buddhist culture of early historic Khotan, focusing on the indigenous Iranian background as well as on Indic and Sinitic influences. The survey considers the presence of Iranian and possibly Greek gods in

Khotan as also non-Buddhist Indic deities and Sinitic cosmological notions, along with the practices of blood sacrifice, fire worship, mountain libations, fertility cults, zodiacal prognostication, and funeral geomancy.

**(3) Wilkens, Jens. “Uyghur Buddhism and the Impact of Manichaeism and Native Religion: The Case of Religious Terminology.”** In *Buddhism in Central Asia III— Impacts of Non-Buddhist Influences, Doctrines*, edited by Lewis Doney, Carmen Meinert, Henrik H. Sørensen, and Yukiyo Kasai, 90–122. Leiden: Brill, 2023.

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**Abstract:**

Uyghur Buddhism owes its emergence to a specific cultural milieu. Not only is it strongly influenced by Tocharian, Chinese, Sogdian, and—in later times (13th–14th centuries)—also Tibetan Buddhism, but because of the royal patronage granted to Manichaeism, the latter helped shape the religious landscape in the West Uyghur Kingdom (second half of the 9th c.–13th c.). Even though Buddhism has exerted a much stronger influence on Manichaeism than vice versa, the latter has played a certain role in the formation of Buddhist literature among the Uyghurs. Faint traces of the indigenous religion of the Uyghurs can also be found in Buddhist and Manichaean texts from the Turfan oasis and from Dunhuang (敦煌). This chapter attempts to pinpoint these aspects, while discussing methodological problems and limitations to the applicability of certain comparative approaches that might help to determine how we should imagine the native religion of Uyghurs. However minor the impact of Manichaeism and native religion may have been, the development of a particular local form of Buddhism in the West Uyghur Kingdom was helped by this contribution.

**(4) Deeg, Max. “The Christian Communities in Tang China: Between Adaptation and Religious Self-Identity.”** In *Buddhism in Central Asia III— Impacts of Non-Buddhist Influences, Doctrines*, edited by Lewis Doney, Carmen Meinert, Henrik H. Sørensen, and Yukiyo Kasai, 123–144. Leiden: Brill, 2023.

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**Abstract:**

This paper will discuss the ‘strategies’ of self-representation of the Christian minority and diaspora community in Tang China (618–907, 唐) in the wider context of a society and culture dominated by strong religious competitors (Buddhism, Daoism) and state (court) regulation. The few preserved documents suggest that the community drew heavily on Buddhist terminology and inherited Chinese religio-cultural concepts when presenting their religion in Chinese (so-called Dunhuang documents) but used a strategy of court affinity and distinction from other religions when presenting itself in a semi-official way (e.g., in the stele inscription of Xi’an 西安). Attention to Khotanese themes in Dunhuang has grown in the past years, increasing the availability of material that has been seldom studied or, so far, gone unnoticed. This paper presents an overview of the topic and an up-to-date assessment of the material, with an eye toward the archaeological data recent discoveries in the oasis of Khotan brought to light.

(5) Sørensen, Henrik H. “On the Presence and Influence of Daoism in the Buddhist Material from Dunhuang.” In *Buddhism in Central Asia III— Impacts of Non-Buddhist Influences, Doctrines*, edited by Lewis Doney, Carmen Meinert, Henrik H. Sørensen, and Yukiyo Kasai, 145–182. Leiden: Brill, 2023.

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**Abstract:**

The present chapter is meant as an introduction to the types of Daoist data we encounter in the Buddhist material as found in the Dunhuang manuscripts. By ‘Daoist data’ we mean concepts, practices and beliefs which originated in the Daoist religion, but which—over the course of time—gradually found their way into Chinese Buddhism through a consistent and prolonged process of inculturation. This was a process during which Daoism from its side adopted, appropriated and modified salient aspects from Buddhism as well. The Buddhist Dunhuang material which reflects this Daoist influence/impact takes a variety of forms. However, the most dense concentration can be found in Buddhist apocrypha, as well as in compositions associated with Esoteric Buddhism (Chin. *mijiao* 密教). Talismans and talismanic seals are one of these areas in which Buddhism adopted from Daoism. While the Buddhists created their own types, which in many cases reflect Buddhist concepts, divinities and functions, the manner of usage has a clear imprint from Daoism. When looking for a conceptual model with which to understand and highlight the manner by which Daoist practices entered Buddhism, it would seem that it was chiefly the traditional Chinese sciences, such as astrology, medicine, etc., which served as the primary conduits for this exchange.

(6) Doney, Lewis. “Non-Buddhist Superhuman Beings in Early Tibetan Religious Literature.” In *Buddhism in Central Asia III— Impacts of Non-Buddhist Influences, Doctrines*, edited by Lewis Doney, Carmen Meinert, Henrik H. Sørensen, and Yukiyo Kasai, 183–211, Leiden: Brill, 2023.

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**Abstract:**

This contribution discusses non-Buddhist religious practices and pantheons evident in documents from the Tibetan imperial period (ca. 600–850) and shortly afterwards that influenced the growing Tibetan Buddhist tradition, and which were later incorporated into the established Bön (Tib. bon) religion that did not exist as such at the imperial court. While problematising our evidence for indigenous Tibetan religious traditions existing before the advent of Buddhism in Tibet, let alone a single pre-Buddhist religion in Tibet, this contribution identifies some rituals, beliefs and narratives that influenced later Buddhist practice, ideology and historiography. It reveals that non-Buddhist elements were positively incorporated into some Buddhist literature and ritual, as well as elsewhere forming a negative ‘other’ to which Tibetan Buddhist identity was opposed.

(7) Berounský, Daniel. “The Fluid Lives of Tibetan Ritual Narrations during the Imperial and Post-Imperial Period.” In *Buddhism in Central Asia III— Impacts of Non-Buddhist Influences, Doctrines*, edited by Lewis Doney, Carmen Meinert, Henrik H. Sørensen, and Yukiyo Kasai, 212–254. Leiden: Brill, 2023.

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**Abstract:**

Buddhism started to play a significant role in the Tibetan Empire (ca. 7th c. to 842, Tib. Bod chen po) from the eighth century onward. On arrival in the Empire, it encountered a ritual tradition lacking universal claim which could be seen as an array of rituals aimed at solving critical situations in the lives of both individual people and society. These rituals were performed by followers of ritualists (Tib. *gshen* or *bon*) who often take on mythic proportions. Up to the present time, Buddhist rituals in Tibet remain the sphere of their descendants' influence. An important element of ritual performance was voicing (Tib. *gyer*) the ritual narrations (Tib. *smrang*), in order to infuse the ritual with meaning. Surviving origination myth accounts (Tib. *rabs*, related to 'lineage/succession') probably reflect a later tendency to assemble various originally locally based myths within single collections of such narrations spanning larger areas of Tibetan Plateau. Through this process, qualitatively different ritual traditions were crystallised, giving some traditions prominence whilst silencing others. Post-imperial texts of monastic Bön (Tib. *bon*) lineages associate the tradition of orating various origin myths with the terms lore or wisdom (Tib. *gtsug lag*). It is possible to speculate that the great variety of ritual narratives were organised under such umbrella terms. One can observe a certain divide between Central Tibetan ritual traditions and those found across large areas of Western, Northern, and Eastern Tibet. The paper eventually introduces the '*Bum bzhi* [Fourfold Collection] that survive in the *Bon bka'* '*gyur* [Bön Kangyur]. These voluminous texts mostly contain origin myths and tales dealing with four kinds of spirits—(1) chthonic spirits (Tib. *klu*), (2) fierce spirits (Tib. *gnyan*), (3) earth-lords (Tib. *sa bdag*) and (4) rock spirits (Tib. *gtod*)—and are difficult to date in their current forms. They contain traces of stages of development reflecting monastic Bön religion and evidence of absorbing Buddhist elements. However, they also preserve some features characterising eastern non-Buddhist ritual traditions, although an attempt to include local Eastern-Tibetan lore in pan-Tibetan ritual tradition likely lies behind their compilation.

**(8) Meinert, Carmen. "People, Places, Texts, and Topics: Another Look at the Larger Context of the Spread of Chan Buddhism in Eastern Central Asia during the Tibetan Imperial and Post-Imperial Period (7th–10th C.)." In *Buddhism in Central Asia III— Impacts of Non-Buddhist Influences, Doctrines*, edited by Lewis Doney, Carmen Meinert, Henrik H. Sørensen, and Yukiyo Kasai, 257–295. Leiden: Brill, 2023.**

[https://static.ceres.rub.de/media/filer\\_public/dc/28/dc2834aa-d638-488d-9337-062af62022c3/buddhism\\_in\\_central\\_asia\\_iii\\_08-meinert\\_2023\\_people\\_places\\_texts\\_and\\_topics.pdf](https://static.ceres.rub.de/media/filer_public/dc/28/dc2834aa-d638-488d-9337-062af62022c3/buddhism_in_central_asia_iii_08-meinert_2023_people_places_texts_and_topics.pdf)

**Abstract:**

The region east of the Blue Lake, which was part of the Tibetan Empire (ca. 8th c. to 842, Tib. Bod chen po) and later the Tangut Empire (ca. 1038–1227, in Chinese sources known as Xixia 西夏), was an important multicultural area connecting the equally diverse oasis towns of the Hexi Corridor (Chin. Hexi zoulang 河西走廊) and the Tarim Basin with Sinitic and Tibetan cultural areas. The present chapter explores the development of the contested space between these cultures in a broader historical context. It also discusses religion, especially Chan in both its Chinese form and as adapted into Tibetan, its links to the famous Samyé Debate, and its use in a power struggle during the ninth and tenth centuries that relates to the well-known Tibetan master Gongpa Rapsel (892–975, Tib. dGongs pa Rab gsal). This expands our picture of how Chan masters, Buddhist works, and religious themes might have interacted on the micro-historical level through local and transregional exchanges in Eastern Central Asia. The chapter thereby brings together information on people, places, texts, and topics related to Chan Buddhism in order to actually locate them in geographical space in the contested region east of the Blue Lake.

**(9) Howard Masang, Meghan. “Sino-Tibetan Scholasticism: A Case Study of the *Pratīyasamutpādaḥṛdaya* in Dunhuang.” In *Buddhism in Central Asia III— Impacts of Non-Buddhist Influences, Doctrines*, edited by Lewis Doney, Carmen Meinert, Henrik H. Sørensen, and Yukiyo Kasai, 296–349. Leiden: Brill, 2023.**

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**Abstract:**

This article approaches the question of how śāstric knowledge was transmitted between linguistic communities through an exploration of the *Pratīyasamutpādaḥṛdaya* [Epitome of Interdependent Origination] and the Tibetan and Chinese commentarial materials associated with it found in Dunhuang (敦煌). I focus on three texts: (1) a Tibetan preface (P. T. 767) that was likely scribed by the famous Sino-Tibetan translator Wu Facheng (d. ca. 864, 吳法成, Tib. 'Go Chos grub), (2) a set of Tibetan annotations to the *Pratīyasamutpādaḥṛdaya* (P. T. 762 and P. T. 766), and (3) a Chinese commentary, the *Yinyuan xin shilun kaijie ji* 因緣心釋論開決記 [Notes that Lay Open and Resolve the Meaning of the (Auto-)Commentary to the Treatise on the Heart of Causation; hereafter Epitome Notes] (T. 2816.85), possibly authored by Facheng. I demonstrate that the Tibetan preface was intended to circulate with an ‘annotated gloss commentary’ (Tib. *mchan tig*), and I argue that sets of annotations such as P. T. 766 should be seen as full-fledged commentarial works. I further point to parallels of structure, content, and phrasing between the Epitome Notes and the Tibetan preface and annotations, suggestive of a rough synthesis of Chinese commentarial forms with Indo-Tibetan content. In closing, I emphasise the impact of Tibetan scholasticism on ninth-century Sinophone Dunhuang Buddhism, and I highlight the importance of textual formats (materiality) and scholastic practices of translation and oral instruction (the social context) to the history of śāstric texts and traditions.

**(10) Kasai, Yukiyo. “Prostration as wuti toudi 五體投地 or wulun toudi 五輪投地? A Possible Trace of Contacts between Certain Uyghur Translators and Esoteric Buddhism.” In *Buddhism in Central Asia III— Impacts of Non-Buddhist Influences, Doctrines*, edited by Lewis Doney, Carmen Meinert, Henrik H. Sørensen, and Yukiyo Kasai, 350–372. Leiden: Brill, 2023.**

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**Abstract:**

With the rise of Amoghavajra (705–774, Chin. Bukong 不空), Esoteric Buddhism (Chin. *mijiao* 密教) experienced a heyday under Tang Dynasty (618–907, 唐) rule. This Buddhist tradition was transmitted not only within that dynasty’s territory but also in neighbouring regions. In Dunhuang (敦煌), at the westernmost boundary of the Tang Empire, numerous texts found among the hoard of manuscripts in Cave 17 evidence that this Buddhist tradition attracted great interest there, too. Dunhuang was closely connected with its neighbours, such that Esoteric Buddhism was likely transmitted throughout Central Asia, including in Turfan. Many previous studies on Buddhism in Turfan, which was under Uyghur rule at the time, primarily dealt with the Uyghur’s Buddhist worship and did not highlight the transmission of Esoteric Buddhism from Dunhuang to Turfan. This absence resulted from a lack of materials showing Esoteric Buddhism flourishing among the Uyghurs. This paper takes Old Uyghur expressions corresponding to the Chinese Buddhist term *wuti toudi/wulun toudi* (五體投地/五輪投地) ‘to throw five limbs to the ground’ as a case study that shows the possible transmission of Esoteric Buddhism to a few Uyghur translators during the pre-Mongolian period.



(11) Doumy, Mélodie and Sam van Schaik. “The Funerary Context of Mogao Cave 17.” In *Buddhism in Central Asia III— Impacts of Non-Buddhist Influences, Doctrines*, edited by Lewis Doney, Carmen Meinert, Henrik H. Sørensen, and Yukiyo Kasai, 373–400. Leiden: Brill, 2023.

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**Abstract:**

The sealed Cave 17 in the Mogao cave complex (Chin. Mogao ku 莫高窟) has given us many of the most important primary sources for understanding Buddhist, and to some extent non-Buddhist, doctrines and practices in Eastern Central Asia, China and Tibet. The best-known theories about the original function of the cave have paid little attention to the details of Buddhist ritual practice. In this paper we reorient the approach to Cave 17 at Dunhuang towards the funerary function of the cave and its contents. We argue that we need to look at the role of the Cave 17 as a Buddhist funerary shrine for a better understanding of its contents, and put this in the context of Buddhist funerary practices involving the interment of books and other religious objects as relics in *stūpas* and shrines.