

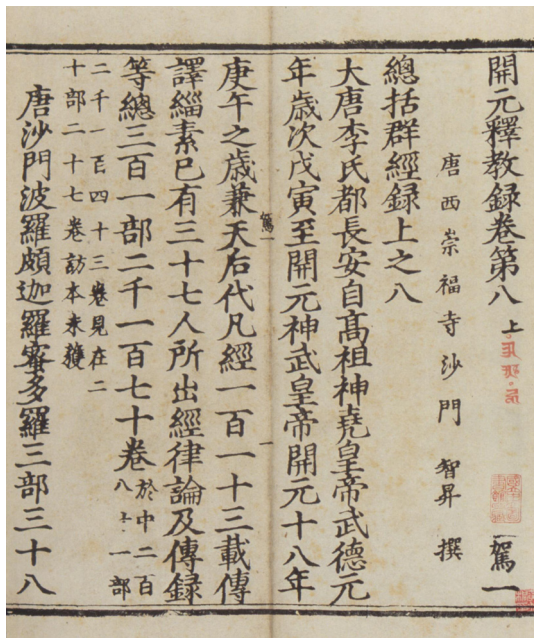


Numata Center
for Buddhist Studies

Problems of Attribution in Chinese Buddhist Translation Literature, and New Techniques for Their Assessment.

A Lecture by **Dr. Michael Radich**, Alexander von Humboldt Research Fellow

The lecture will be held on Wednesday, 18. November 2015, 16:15-17:45 h, Universität Hamburg, Asien-Afrika Institut, ESA O, Room 209. The entrance is free.



Picture: Michael Radich

The Chinese Buddhist canon contains over 1700 texts (including several large compendia) understood by tradition to have been translated from Indic originals. These texts form the bedrock for our understanding of many dimensions of Chinese Buddhist history. They have also been mined intensively for information about Buddhism in India and other parts of the world. However, modern scholarship has also made it clear that many of the ascriptions in this corpus are dubious or faulty, and it arguably cannot be known, at the present state of the field, how many more such problems lurk still undiscovered.

Given that problems in ascription often have significant repercussions for dating, this is a major problem in Buddhology at large. To date, critical scrutiny of traditional ascriptions by scholars has largely been conducted upon the basis of the external evidence of catalogues, biographies, colophons etc. Critical evaluation on the basis of internal evidence, such as style, has lagged behind in both quantity of studies, and the results they have yielded. However, the digitisation of the Chinese canon represents major new opportunities in this regard. It opens up the possibility of harnessing the power of computers to handle large quantities of information to assist us in grappling with such questions.

In this talk, I will discuss the nature and scope of the problems at issue; and I will describe a new project to develop new methods to tackle them on the basis of internal evidence, and to apply those methods to several key cases.



Dr. Michael Radich is a Senior Lecturer in Religious Studies from Victoria University of Wellington, New Zealand. A New Zealander by birth, he was educated at Auckland University in composition, music analysis and Asian Studies, and then at Harvard in East Asian Studies. He received his PhD from Harvard in 2007 for a dissertation entitled “The Somatics of Liberation: Ideas about Embodiment in Buddhism from Its Origins to the Fifth Century C.E.” He has taught at Victoria University of Wellington since 2005. Aside from his translation of Kazushige Shingu, “Being Irrational: Lacan, the *Objet a*, and the Golden Mean”, Dr. Radich is also the author of “How Ajatasatru Was Reformed: The Domestication of ‘Ajase’, Stories in Buddhist History”, and “The Mahaparinirvana-mahasutra and the Emergence of Tathagatagarbha/Buddha Nature Doctrine.”