



Numata Zentrum
für Buddhismuskunde

Washing and Dyeing the Robes: An Identity Marker in Buddhist Monasteries of Ancient India and China

A lecture by **Dr. Ann Heirman**, Ghent University, Belgium

The lecture will be held on Tuesday 14. April 2015 von 18.15–19.45 h, ESA O,
Room 123, Edmund-Siemers-Allee 1, Universität Hamburg. The entrance is free.



Bild: Dunhuang mural, Yulin cave 25; Duan Wenjie 段文傑 (ed.), *Dunhuang shique yishu* 敦煌石窟藝術 (Dunhuang Cave Art), *Yulin ku di erwu ku fu di yiwu ku* (Zhong Tang) 榆林窟第二窟附第一窟 (中唐) (Yulin cave 25, with some additions of cave 15) (Middle Tang), Nanjing: Jiangsu meishu chubanshe, 1993, p.54 (in color, original)

Among the most striking identity markers of a Buddhist monastic community are the robes worn by its members. It is therefore not surprising that disciplinary (*vinaya*) texts contain a wealth of guidelines on robes, and that much research has been done on how to make and wear such robes. The present article focuses on a much less studied, yet equally essential, aspect: the care of monastic robes. As we will see, disciplinary texts are similarly informative on this issue, although in this instance the guidelines are scattered throughout the various chapters of the *vinayas*.

Taking care of one's robes involved washing and dyeing them properly, and many details are provided on exactly how to do both. The *vinayas* offer a wealth of information on both the material culture of early Buddhist India and the monastic way to deal

with the guidelines relating to robes. In sum, their rules provide an intriguing picture of how a Buddhist monastic community in India ideally took care of one of its most visible features – the monastic robe.



Ann Heirman, Ph.D. (1998) in Oriental Languages and Cultures, is professor of Chinese Language and Culture and head of the Centre for Buddhist Studies at Ghent University in Belgium. She has published extensively on Chinese Buddhist monasticism and the development of disciplinary rules, including Rules for Nuns according to the *Dharmaguptakavinaya* (Motilal Banarsidass, 2002), *The Spread of Buddhism* (Brill, edited volume with Stephan Peter Bumbacher, 2007), and *A Pure Mind in a Clean Body* (with Mathieu Torck, Academia Press, 2012).