

Lecture

The globalization of Buddhism in the 21st century

Dr. Olaf Beuchling

(Research Fellow, Numata Center for Buddhist Studies)

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Globalization has been identified as the characteristic feature of Buddhism in the 21st century. According to this, Buddhism has developed from a doctrine of spiritual liberation that originated in the context of the Indian subcontinent 2500 years ago to a world religion that can currently look back on worldwide resonance and spread.

Today Buddhism is the fourth largest world religion after Christianity, Islam and Hinduism. The vast majority of Buddhists still live in Asia, especially in the countries of South, Southeast and East Asia. But Buddhism has also become an integral part of religious landscapes outside Asia, especially in Western affluent societies.

In this talk, we follow the global transmission of Buddhism along several themes and questions: What are the characteristics of contemporary Buddhism that allow us to speak of global Buddhism? Can the world-wide spread of Buddhism on the continents be quantified? How have developments in media technology contributed to fundamental changes in the transmission of Buddhism? What role have individuals as well as groups played and continue to play as pioneers of Buddhist transmission? How have the various cultural contexts in which Buddhism has established itself influenced teaching and practice?



Dr. Olaf Beuchling is a cultural scientist who has taught at various universities in Germany and abroad. He has held professorships at the universities of Magdeburg and Leipzig, was a visiting professor at the Autonomous University of Barcelona and is a research associate at the Numata Center for Buddhist Studies at the University of Hamburg. He has written 6 books and numerous articles translated into German, Vietnamese, English and other languages. His research focuses on the globalization of Buddhism, Vietnamese Buddhism, evolutionary cultural theory and education as cultural transmission.