



July 11 – 13, 2019

International Workshop:

New Perspectives on the Idea of Buddha-Nature in Indian Buddhism

Recent years have seen a turn in the study of ideas associated with the concept of buddha-nature ideas that originated in India as part of the Mahayana Buddhist tradition. Long-standing paradigms, established in the 1960s by the eminent Japanese scholar Takasaki Jikido, became questioned. New approaches to explain for the origin of the concept were offered.

During this workshop at Hamburg University, the world's leading scholars on this subject will gather and discuss these new developments. The workshop aims at throwing light on the questions where we stand now and which directions future research might take.

The workshop is open to the public. Please contact the Numata Center for Buddhist Studies for more information.

Workshop Schedule

July 11, Thursday 18:15 – 19:45, Asien-Afrika-Institut, ESA-Ost (East Wing) Room 221

Key-note lecture: Prof. Dr. Michael Radich

July 12, Friday 9:00 – 16:00, Von-Melle-Park 8 (VMP 8) Room 213

Prof. Dr. Michael Radich 9:00 – 10:00

PD Dr. Hiromi Habata 10:00 – 11:00

Coffee break

Prof. Dr. Akira Saito 11:30 – 12:30

Lunch

Prof. Dr. Kazuo Kano 14:00 – 15:00

Dr. Christopher V. Jones 15:00 – 16:00

July 13, Saturday 9:00 – 12:30, Von-Melle-Park 8 (VMP 8) Room 213

Prof. Dr. Hong Luo 9:00 – 10:00

Prof. Dr. Masahiro Shimoda 10:00 – 11:00

Coffee Break

Prof. Dr. Michael Zimmermann 11:30 – 12:30

Topics & Abstracts

Key-note lecture: **Michael Radich**

Professor at the Heidelberg Centre for Transcultural Studies, University of Heidelberg

July 11, 18:15 – 19:45, Asien-Afrika-Institut, ESA-Ost (East Wing) Room 221

Several Indian Contexts for *Tathāgatagarbha*

Abstract: In this talk, I will place *tathāgatagarbha* in relation to several contexts in Indian Buddhism and religion. I will attempt to trace an “imaginative logic” linking *tathāgatagarbha* to these contexts, and accounting (in part) for the emergence of *tathāgatagarbha* thought and literature. I will attempt thereby to argue that the rigorous and disciplined consideration of the logic behind imagery and terminology can be a useful part of our method in studying the history of Buddhist ideas and practices.



Michael Radich

Professor at the Heidelberg Centre for Transcultural Studies, University of Heidelberg

July 12, Friday 9:00 – 10:00, Von-Melle-Park 8 (VMP 8) Room 213

***Tathāgatagarbha* Doctrine as Part of Patterns of Docetism about the Maternity of Buddhas**

Abstract: In this talk, I will reprise arguments from my 2015 monograph, *The Mahāparinirvāṇa-mahāsūtra and the Emergence of Tathāgatagarbha Doctrine*, relating the emergence of *tathāgatagarbha* doctrine to patterns of docetism about the *bodhisatva*/Buddha's corporeal existence, and especially the problems presented by his apparent conception, gestation, and birth, and the idea that he had an ordinary, physical human mother.



Hiroimi Habata

Privatdozent, Research Associate (Indology) at the Ludwig-Maximilians-Universität München

July 12, Friday 10:00 – 11:00, Von-Melle-Park 8 (VMP 8) Room 213

The *Amṛta*-section in the *Mahāparinirvāṇa-mahāsūtra* and the Senavarma Inscription

Abstract: The terms for the “Buddha-nature”, *tathāgatagarbha*, *tathāgatadhātu* and *buddhadhātu* are used in the *Mahāparinirvāṇa-mahāsūtra*. In this sūtra, the word *dhātu* is used in the meaning ‘element of the body’, and the compound *buddhadhātu* means ‘element of the body of the Buddha’. Therefore this term is concerned with its original and general meaning ‘relic of the Buddha’. In the section in which the idea *amṛta* is thematized, the compound *buddhadhātu* is used obviously with the meaning ‘relic of the Buddha’. This section seems to contain early expressions of the *buddhadhātu* in the *Mahāparinirvāṇa-mahāsūtra* and allow a possible interpretation for an earlier stage of the idea of the “Buddha-nature”. Furthermore, the *amṛta*-section could shed a light on a difficult passage in the Senavarma inscription, of which the interpretation is controversial.

Akira Saito

Professor at the International College for Postgraduate Buddhist Studies and Professor Emeritus at the University of Tokyo

July 12, Friday 11:30 – 12:30, Von-Melle-Park 8 (VMP 8) Room 213

Buddha-Nature or Buddha Within: Revisiting the Meaning of *Tathāgatagarbha*

Abstract: The topic on what the compound *tathāgata-garbha* means has indeed a long history of research in the field of Mahāyāna Buddhism. However, despite a good number of studies so far executed on this topic, it is most unfortunate for us to recognize that the above question remains unsolved. The present paper, therefore, tries again to solve the question through an analytical inquiry into the *Ratnagotravibhāga* (RGV) in rather a wide perspective.



Kazuo Kano

Professor at Komazawa University

July 12, Friday 14:00 – 15:00, Von-Melle-Park 8 (VMP 8) Room 213

To become a *Upāsaka* without Taking Refuge to the Three Jewels and without Receiving the Five Precepts: Possible Target-audiences/readers of the *Mahāparinirvāṇamahāsūtra*



Abstract: For attaining *upāsaka*-ship, as a rule, one has to first take the refuge to the Three Jewels and to receive the Five Precepts in front of Saṃgha's members. The *Mahāparinirvāṇamahāsūtra*, however, explicitly teaches the *upāsakas* who should not receive the Five Precepts (for protecting monks) in Vajrābhedyakāya chapter. Likewise, in *Tathāgatadhātu chapter (Habata Tib. ed. §387–391) it denies to take the Three Jewels as a condition for attaining the *upāsaka*-ship (stating them as mundane refuges) and establishes taking the refuge to solely the buddha within himself (that is, doctrinally supported by the *tathāgatagarbha* teaching). Also, relevant statements are found in other passages. I shall investigate these passages in detail and try to clarify the idea behind them taking into consideration of further evidences that show the link between *upāsakas* and this scripture (e.g. the origin from where the Sanskrit manuscripts stems, the connotation of the title *mahāsūtra*, etc. as studied by Skilling, Hodge, Habata, Shimoda, Radich, etc.). These passages likely suggest that the compiler(s) of this scripture try to justify *upāsakas* who have no public permission of Saṃgha's majority members and to adopt the *tathāgatagarbha* teaching to pragmatical purposes.

Christopher V. Jones

Postdoctoral Research Fellow, Faculty of Oriental Studies & St Peter's College,
University of Oxford

July 12, Friday 15:00 – 16:00, Von-Melle-Park 8 (VMP 8) Room 213

Two Garlands on the Single Vehicle: *Ekayāna* and *Tathāgatagarbha* in the *Aṅgulimāliya-* and *Śrīmālā-Sūtras*



Abstract: If we accept Michael Radich's hypothesis that the *Mahāparinirvāṇa-mahāsūtra* provides our earliest surviving account of the *tathāgatagarbha*, then we are also invited to reimagine the next stages in the development of teaching about Buddha-nature in India. One important repercussion of this hypothesis is that the earliest instance of teaching about *tathāgatagarbha* articulates this in terms of some enduring essence or element (*dhātu*), which sits in conspicuous tension with earlier Buddhist teaching about impermanence and absence of self. Moreover, understanding that *tathāgatagarbha* refers instead to the intrinsic nature of the mind (e.g. *prakṛtipariśuddhacitta*) appears to be a reinvention of this expression, presumably in response to an older, more contentious mode of imagining Buddha-nature as something more static or substantial. Two texts that show awareness of the *Mahāparinirvāṇa-mahāsūtra* – or at least of its teachings about the *tathāgatagarbha* – are the *Aṅgulimāliyasūtra* and *Śrīmālādevīsīmaṇādasūtra* (henceforth *Śrīmālāsūtra*). Scholars including Takasaki and Kano have observed interesting similarities between the *Aṅgulimāliyasūtra* and

Śrīmālāsūtra, though it is also clear that these two works take their accounts of to what the expression *tathāgatagarbha* must refer in very different directions. This paper will explore the commonalities and differences between the *Aṅgulimāliya-* and *Śrīmālāsūtras*. That these texts feature some strikingly similar imagery and ideas – in particular a curious ‘streamlining’ of Buddhist teachings, clearly influenced by the *Saddharmapuṇḍarīkasūtra* – suggests that the productions of these texts were somehow related, perhaps such that one may even have been imagined as a response to the other.

Hong Luo

Professor at the Institute for Tibetan Studies of Sichuan University

July 13, Saturday 9:00 – 10:00, Von-Melle-Park 8 (VMP 8) Room 213

An Anachronistic Analogy: Rereading the *Dasheng Qixin Lun* in the Light of Ratnākaraśānti’s *Prajñāpāramitopadeśa*



Abstract: This paper aims to present and observe answers, gleaned respectively from the *Dasheng Qixin Lun* (大乘起信論, **Mahāyāna-śraddhotpādaśāstra*) and Ratnākaraśānti’s (ca. 970–1045) *Prajñāpāramitopadeśa*, to the following four questions: 1) What is the being? 2) How is the *saṃsāra* functioning? 3) How is the real connected with the unreal? 4) What is the ultimate? Correspondingly, we shall focus on four concepts taken from the *Dasheng Qixin Lun*, the two perspectives of the single mind (一心二門, Yi-xin Er-men), the intermingling mind (和合識, He-he Shi), the perfuming between the real and the unreal (真妄互熏, Zhen-wang Hu-xun), and the essence of perception (覺性, Jue-xing), a term used in Paramārtha’s (499–569, 真谛, Zhen-di) translation of the *Dasheng Qixin Lun* and corresponds to the original perception (本覺, Ben-jue) used by Śikṣānanda (652–710, 實叉難陀, Shi-cha-nan-tuo). For the *Dasheng Qixin Lun*, to be consists of, simultaneously, the perspective of the suchness of the mind (心真如門, Xin Zhen-ru Men) and the perspective of the arising and dissolving of the mind (心生滅門, Xin Sheng-mie Men). For Ratnākaraśānti, to further trace his sources demands a separate occasion, the *paratantra*, which is nothing but the *abhūtaparikalpa*, has two orientations, it becomes *parikalpita* if thus sensed, it becomes *pariṇiṣpanna*, if sensed as such.

For the *Dasheng Qixin Lun*, the *saṃsāra*, the perspective of arising and dissolving, is the *ālayavijñāna* (阿梨耶識, A-li-ye Shi), which is the intermingling of, on the one hand, the arising and dissolving, and on the other hand, that which transcends both. For Ratnākaraśānti, the *saṃsāra*, the imagination of the unreal (*abhūtaparikalpa*), is the interplay of the false image (*ākāra*) and the sole and ultimate real luminosity (*prakāśamātra*). For the *Dasheng Qixin Lun*, the real, the *tathatā* (Zhen-ru, 真如), though devoid of any contamination, appears contaminated due to the perfuming of the unreal; the unreal, the *avidyā* (無明, Wu-ming), though devoid of any uncontaminated function, functions in a way conducive to the *tathatā* due to the perfuming of the *tathatā*. For Ratnākaraśānti, the real, the *prakāśa*, coexist with the unreal, the *ākāra*, in a way defined by him as the superimposed two-in-one (*tādātmya*). For the fourth topic, we shall propose *prakāśamānatā* / *prakāśātmatā* / *prakāśātmatva* as other possible Sanskrit equivalents of the essence of perception, a synonym of the essence of knowing (解性, Jie-xing) used by Paramārtha and others in related texts.

Finally, we shall re-examine a few conclusions on the *Dasheng Qixin Lun* drawn in secondary literature, and address the significance of the late Mādhyamika literature to Buddhist studies.

Masahiro Shimoda

Professor at University of Tokyo

July 13, Saturday 10:00 – 11:00, Von-Melle-Park 8 (VMP 8) Room 213

A Linguistic Domain as a Field of Consciousness: Appearance of a New Mode of Discourse in Mahāyāna Sūtras and the Germination of the Soteriology of *Tathāgatagarbha* Doctrine



Abstract: It seems that the biting criticism by Critical Buddhism of *tathāgatagarbha* doctrine as being an argument that nullifies the significance of practice by substantiating the principle of salvation has not yet been fully refuted. In order to demonstrate that this criticism has gone amiss, three points should be explained in systematic order: first, the existence of a difference in methodology between a descriptive approach resulting in a history of thought and a normative one to be shown in a theoretical structure; second, two-tiered configuration in salvation in religions in general that manifests as polemic dichotomy such as sacred vs. profane, *nirvāṇa* vs. *saṃsāra*, and so forth; and third, the relationship of the difference in mode of discourse to its corresponding characteristics of theory. The last point among these three deserves special attention since, up to today, this point has not been addressed in the works of scholars of Buddhism. As leading theorists involved in the articulation of the linguistic turn in history such as Hayden White, Paul Ricœur, and Jacques Derrida demonstrate, a linguistic domain functions as a field of consciousness for the reader of the text. The characteristic feature in the discourse of the *Ratnagotravibhāga* that weaves various citations from various Mahāyāna sūtras into a system of thought as *tathāgatagarbha* theory reveals that this doctrine is made possible by the distinguishing characteristic mode of discourse in Mahāyāna sūtras that converts the perspective of discourse from the dimension of sentient beings in the profane to that of the fully awakened ones in the sacred.

Michael Zimmermann

Professor at the Numata Center for Buddhist Studies at Hamburg University,
Tsukuba University

July 13, Saturday 11:30 – 12:30, Von-Melle-Park 8 (VMP 8) Room 213

Research on Buddha-Nature in Past and Future: Where are We Heading to?



Abstract: Research on the concept that all living beings have buddha-nature comes along with a wide spectrum of associations. The topic can be approached from different perspectives. As a multi-dimensional subject of study, it can reveal an intrinsic Buddhist stand towards the world, be it in its historical ramifications or now, when Buddhists reflect on alternative models of engaging with the world. The talk will summarize the outcome of this workshop and try to draw conclusions relevant for the issue what some of the crucial questions on the concept of buddha-nature in the future will be. It will set the ground for a final round of discussion among the speakers and other specialists in the audience.