

Workshop:
„Buddhist Confession Rituals of Monks and Laymen“
22.-24.07.2007

at Heidelberg University, KHG, Edith Stein Haus, Neckarstaden 32, 69117 Heidelberg

Organized by:
SFB 619, Project B6: „Buddhist Confession Rituals at Chinese Buddhist Cave Temples“
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Everybody interested in the topic is welcome to participate. The workshop language is English and Chinese, while translation will be provided.

Visit our website at:
http://sun.sino.uni-heidelberg.de/aktuell/workshop_buddhistrituals_2007.htm



During the confession ritual, Buddhanames and texts of confession were chanted. (Detail of a manuscript of a “Sutra of Buddhanames 佛名經”, late Tang Dynasty, Dunhuang, China)

Introduction:

The project „Buddhist Confession Rituals at Chinese Buddhist Cave Temples“ (B6) of the Collaborative Research Centre „Dynamics of Ritual“ organizes a three day workshop “Buddhist Confession Rituals of Monks and Laymen”.

Buddhist confession rituals are conducted since the earliest time of the introduction of Buddhism to China and are still practiced until the present day.

According to textual evidence in the Buddhist canon and in manuscripts from the Dunhuang cave-temples, Buddhist confession rituals were practiced by monks and lay believers alike. The confession rituals of Buddhist monks in monasteries are determined according to the yearly calendar and the monastic precepts. Additional private confession practices could be held by the ardent believer at any time during special retreats and were closely connected to meditation practices to achieve enlightenment. Buddhist lay believers however followed a wide variety of confession liturgies as well. For example it is documented, that Emperor Wu of the Southern Liang Dynasty (502-557) conducted a confession ceremony to gain merits on behalf of his lately deceased wife.

According to these documents we know, that confession rituals included the invocation and veneration of Buddha-names and recitation of confession texts. Nearly every Buddhist school or tradition had its own confession rituals and the textual evidences of confessions are abundant.

But we do not only have textual, but also visual evidence of Confession rituals. In Chinese Buddhist cave temples since the 6th century onward, engraved texts of confession rituals and Buddha-names are combined with carved images of the Buddhas. However it seems that only a small number of the available confession rituals at that time did inspire the engravings at Buddhist cave temples. The interpretation of the material evidence at the cave temples is the aim of the above named project and will provide new aspects of the practice of Buddhist confession rituals through the interpretation of the ritual space and textual location.

As Buddhist confession rituals are still practiced today in the temples and lay-believer's homes, observation of and communication with practitioners supplies another source of information.

In accordance with the central claim of the Collaborative research centre, who focuses on the changes of rituals, it is the aim of the workshop to question the developments and changes of confession rituals in their structural, social and historical perspective.

Therefore the scholars will not only present their actual research, but also exchange their opinions and discuss specifically the following questions during the workshop:

- How did the Buddhist confession rituals develop and change, as soon as Buddhism adopted itself to Chinese culture?
- How structurally different are confession rituals of various schools, or traditions of learning in India and China?
- How did the confession rituals change over a longer historical perspective? Are certain tendencies or traditions of confession liturgy prevailing over others in certain time periods?
- What exactly are the differences between confession rituals of monks and lay-believers?
- How different or similar are the confession rituals today from their predecessors?
- What is specifically Chinese about the way Buddhist confession rituals were conducted and what can we learn from that with respect to the Chinese ideas of guilt, redemption or forgiveness?

- What are the differences or similarities of the Buddhist concept of confession, sin and redemption in comparison to Christian, Islamic or Jewish concepts?

In discussing and arguing over the above questions, it is hoped that a complete picture of the development of the Buddhist confession rituals can be achieved. It is proposed, that Chinese Buddhist confession rituals can be taken as a paradigmatic case study for probing into and understanding the concepts of Chinese thought.

Therefore the workshop specifically invites scholars with various methodological approaches and stresses an interdisciplinary perspective. The participants have expertise in the textual, visual and ethnological sciences and the knowledge of the practicing Buddhist believer.

!New Program! (Jul 21)

Sunday, 22.07.2007

Date of Arrival

18.00

Well-come and dinner for the participants

Monday, 23.07.2007

9.00 s.t. Opening address

9.15-9.45

Ann Heirmann (Gent University): "Vinaya rules: Yijing's ideas on wrong and right"

9.45-10.00 Discussion

10.00-10.30

Paul Copp (University of Chicago): "Dharani as Prayer and as Confession"

10.30-10.45 Discussion

10.45-11.00 Coffee break

11.00-11.45

Sheng Kai (Qinghua University, Beijing): "中古时期药师礼忏仪的形成与发展 - Form and Development of the 'Medicine Buddha Confession Ceremony' in Ancient China"

11.45-12.00 Discussion

12.00-12.30 Summary and General Discussion

12.30-14.30

Lunch

14.30-15.15

Wang Chuan (Ming Chuan University, Taoyuan): „佛名經’在中國的流傳與影響- Spread and Influence of the ‘Sutra of the Buddhanames’ in China”

15.15-15.30 Discussion

15.30-16.00

Petra Rösch (Heidelberg University): “The 35 and 53 Buddhanames Confession at Chinese Buddhist Cave-temples”

16.00-17.00 General Discussion

Tuesday, 24.07.2007

10.15-10.30

Claudia Wenzel (Heidelberg University): "Purification and Repentance in Preparation for Buddha Visualization"

10.30-10.45 Discussion

10.45-11.30

Zhao Zhou (Heidelberg University): “The Stone Seal Mountain (Shizhuanshan 石篆山) in Sichuan province and the Shuilu ritual of the Northern Song Dynasty”

11.30-12.30 General Discussion

12.15-14.30 Lunch Break

14.30-17.00

Thomas Rutte (KHG, Heidelberg University), Janina Karolewski (Heidelberg University): Comparing Christian, Islamic and Buddhist confession rituals, key-note addresses and discussion

Final Discussion and concluding remarks