



**Currents: Local Practices and Popular Beliefs in Buddhism
2023 Cambridge Graduate Student Conference on East Asian Studies**

Call For Papers

6th July (Thursday) – 7th July (Friday)

Submission Deadline: 31 May 2023

Like the flow of currents, the dissemination and diffusion of Buddhism in East Asian societies takes place in various directions. Robert E. Buswell Jr. conceptualises currents and countercurrents to describe the diverse regional strands of influence on the East Asian Buddhist tradition. Beside cross-regional developments, currents or subcurrents within a regional Buddhist tradition can manifest in the convergence and divergence between institutionalised teachings and local practices. Dominated mainly by lay people's experiences of Buddhism, local practices and popular beliefs usually present a considerable degree of religious and cultural hybridity. Moreover, at a local level, religious rituals and liturgical performances are often integrated with vernacular genres of storytelling such as literature and drama. Since the inception of the eastward Buddhist missionary in the second or third century, some of these local currents prosper concomitantly with Buddhist monasteries that have been centres of regional learning and practice, while others are considered illegitimate and constantly banned by political authorities.

This conference invites graduate students from the UK and Europe to submit proposals for presentations exploring local practices and popular beliefs in East Asian Buddhism. Topics include but are not limited to:

- (1) Local practices and rural religions
- (2) Vernacular literature, drama and ritual performance
- (3) Lay ritual practices
- (4) Universal themes underlying local beliefs
- (5) Deification and the creation of local pantheons
- (6) Demonisation and demonology in Buddhism

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We also welcome submissions on other topics relevant to Buddhism and/or other faiths in East Asia.

The conference will take place in person at the University of Cambridge. There will be no hybrid arrangements. With the kind support from the Tzu Chi Foundation, we will be able to

cover domestic travel costs within the UK and international travel up to 100 GBP, and provide accommodations for two nights at Cambridge.

Please submit your abstract (250-300 words) by **31 May 2023** via [this Google form](#). Please include the following information in your proposal:

- (1) Author(s)
- (2) Affiliation
- (3) Email
- (4) Title
- (5) Abstract
- (6) Keywords (up to five)

The final decision will be made by early June. Any queries can be addressed to Ilay Golan at ig411@cam.ac.uk.

The Tzu Chi Foundation's support of Buddhist Studies at the University of Cambridge is managed by Dr Noga Ganany. For more information, contact Dr Ganany at ng462@cam.ac.uk.

Best wishes,

The Organizing committee:

Ilay Golan (University of Cambridge)

Yizhuo Li (University of Cambridge)

Junfu Wong (University of Cambridge)