

Megan Bryson
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Department of Religious Studies
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Current Position:

Assistant Professor, Department of Religious Studies, University of Tennessee, Knoxville

EMPLOYMENT

Assistant Professor, Department of Religious Studies, University of Tennessee, Knoxville (2013-)

Lecturer, Department of Religious Studies, University of Tennessee, Knoxville, 2010-2013

EDUCATION

Stanford University, Stanford, California, 2002-2010

Ph.D. in Religious Studies, September 23, 2010

Specializations: Chinese Buddhism, Chinese Religions, East Asian Buddhism, Buddhism and Gender

Advisors: Dr. Carl Bielefeldt, Dr. Bernard Faure

University of Oregon, Eugene, Oregon, 1996-2000

B.A., Religious Studies and Chinese, *summa cum laude*, with departmental honors, March 2000

Thesis topic: The construction of Buddhist discourse on gender and ritual pollution in late imperial China.

PUBLICATIONS

Books

Forthcoming

2016. *Goddess on the Frontier: Religion, Ethnicity, and Gender in Southwest China*. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press.

In Process

Esoteric Networks: Transregional Buddhism in the Dali Kingdom.

Peer-Reviewed Articles

In Print

2013. "Baijie and the Bai: Gender and Ethnic Religion in Dali, Yunnan." *Asian Ethnology* 72.1: 3-31.

2014 [2012/13]. "Mahākāla Worship in the Dali Kingdom (937-1253): A Study of the *Dahei tianshen daochang yi*." *Journal of the International Association of Buddhist Studies* 35: 3-69.

2015. "Religious Women and Modern Men: Intersections of Ethnicity and Gender in The Tale of Woman Huang." *Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society* 40.3: 623-646.

2016 [2015]. “Tsenpo Chung, Yunnan wang, Mahārāja: Royal Titles in Narratives of Nanzhao Kingship between Tibet and Tang China.” *Cahiers d’Extrême-Asie* 24: 59-76.

Accepted for Publication

“Southwestern Chan: Lineage in Texts and Art of the Dali Kingdom (937-1253).” Special issue of *Pacific World* dedicated to the late John R. McRae.

“Gendering Ethnic Religion in 1940s-50s Yunnan: Sexuality in the Gua sa la Festival and the Worship of the Goddess Baijie.” Special issue of *Nannü: Men, Women and Gender in China*.

In Process

“Benevolent Kings on the Border: The *Renwang jing* in Dali Buddhism”

“Made in China: Zen Consumption in the Contemporary U.S.”

Book Chapters

Submitted

“Between China and Tibet: Mahākāla Worship and Esoteric Buddhism in the Dali Kingdom.” For *Esoteric Buddhism: Chinese and Tibetan Forms*, edited by Yael Bentor and Meir Shahar. Leiden: Brill.

“Nation Founder and Universal Saviour: Guanyin and Buddhist Networks in the Nanzhao and Dali Kingdoms.” For *Network and Identity: Exchange Relations between China and the World*, edited by Ann Heirman, Carmen Meinert, and Christoph Anderl. Leiden: Brill.

Conference Proceedings

“Dali *Dahei tianshen daochang yi he Riben Daikoku tenjin hō de bijiao*” [A Comparison of the Dali kingdom *Bodhimāṇḍa Ritual for the God Mahākāla* and the Japanese *Rituals of the God Mahākāla*]. Translated by Huang Huang. Proceedings of “Jingdian, yishi yu minjian xinyang” [Scriptures, Ritual, and Folk Beliefs]. October, 2014.

“Dali mijiao yigui yu Tangdai fojiao wenxian: yi *Tongyong qiqing yigui wei li*” [Dali Tantric Ritual and Tang Buddhist Texts: Taking the *Tongyong qiqing* as an Example]. Proceedings of the Third Chinese Tantra International Academic Seminar. August, 2016.

Book Reviews

In Print

2014. Beata Grant and Wilt L. Idema. *Escape from Blood Pond Hell: The Tales of Mulian and Woman Huang*. Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2011. *Chinese Literature: Essays, Articles, Reviews* 36: 205-207.

2016. Gareth Fisher. *From Comrades to Bodhisattvas: Moral Dimensions of Lay Buddhist Practice in Contemporary China*. University of Hawai‘i Press: Honolulu, 2014. *Religion*.

2016. James A. Benn. *Tea in China: A Religious and Cultural History*. University of Hawai‘i Press: Honolulu, 2015. *Studies in Chinese Religions*.

Forthcoming

Meir Shahar. *Oedipal God: The Chinese Nezha and His Indian Origins*. University of Hawai‘i Press: Honolulu, 2015. *Journal of Chinese Religions*.

EXHIBITS

Associate Curator

“Zen Buddhism and the Arts of Japan.” Frank H. McClung Museum, University of Tennessee, Knoxville. September 15-December 31, 2012.
I wrote the text panels, image labels, and exhibit brochure, and consulted on the layout. I also led docent training and a teacher inservice on the exhibit.

PAPERS PRESENTED

- “Lianchihui and Jiezhū: Women’s Religious Societies in Rural Southwest and Southeast China.” International Conference on Chinese Women in World History in Taipei, Taiwan (forthcoming, July 2017)
- “The Buddhist World of the *Baiguo yinyou*.” Conference on Buddhist Literature. Chengdu, China. (forthcoming, October 2016)
- “Dali Tantric Ritual and Tang Buddhist Texts: Taking the *Tongyong qiqing yigui* and *Zhu fo pusa jingang deng qiqing yigui* as Examples.” Third Chinese International Academic Seminar on Chinese Tantra. Jianchuan, China. (August 2016)
- “Changing the Conversation: The Shift from Confucian to Buddhist Rhetoric in Nanzhao Records.” Association for Asian Studies Annual Meeting. Seattle, WA. (April 2016)
- “Buddhists, not Barbarians: Reimagining the Southern Border in Qing-dynasty China. American Comparative Literature Association Annual Meeting. Cambridge, MA. (March 2016)
- “Creating Ethnic Religion: History and Ethnography in Dali, Yunnan.” Understanding Religious Change in China: Connecting History and Anthropology. Harvard University. (February 2016)
- “Gendering *Minzu* and *Zongjiao*: The Goddess Baijie in 1930s-1950s Yunnan.” Conference on Gender and Religion in 20th-century China. Rutgers University. (October 2015)
- “Networks and Identity in Dali-Kingdom Buddhism.” Conference on Networks and Religious Difference in Asian Buddhist Traditions. Vanderbilt University. (April 2015)
- “Made in China: Zen Consumption in the Contemporary U.S.” AAR Annual Meeting, San Diego (November 2014)
- “Transforming through Virtue: Tang-Nanzhao Relations in the 766 *Dehua bei*.” Southeast Early China Roundtable annual meeting. University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill. (November 2014)
- “Dali ‘Dahei tianshen daochang yi’ he Riben ‘Dahei tianshen fa’ de bijiao” (A Comparison of the Dali *Rituals of the Bodhimaṇḍa of the God Mahākāla* and the Japanese *Methods of the God Mahākāla*). Conference “Jingdian, yishi yu minjian xinyang” (Scriptures, Ritual, and Folk Beliefs). Shanghai Normal University (October 2014)
- “Btsan po gcung, Yunnan wang, Mahārāja: Narratives of Nanzhao Buddhist Kingship between Tibet and Tang.” Conference on Ritual + Narrative + Kingship ÷ Tibet + Surrounding Cultural Area. LMU, Munich. (July 2014)

- “Between China and Tibet: Mahākāla Worship and Esoteric Buddhism in the Dali Kingdom.” Conference on Chinese and Tibetan Tantric Buddhism. Hebrew University. (June 2014)
- “Tantric Buddhist Ritual in the Dali Kingdom.” International Interdisciplinary Conference on Middle-Period China, 800-1400. Harvard University. (June 2014)
- “The Lotus on the Border: the *Lotus Sūtra* in the Nanzhao and Dali Kingdoms.” International Lotus Sutra Seminar. Tokyo. (May 2014)
- “Indian Image, Chinese Text: Mahākāla Worship in the Dali Kingdom.” Network and Identity: Exchange Relations between China and the World. Ghent University. (December 2013)
- “Barbarian Buddhist Kingship: Esoteric Masculinities in the Dali Kingdom (937-1253).” AAR Annual Meeting, Baltimore. (November 2013)
- “Scripture on Repaying the Kindness of Blood River.” Workshop on gender in Chinese religion. George Washington University, Washington D.C. (November 2013)
- “Pure Bones: Women and Relics in Medieval Buddhism.” Southeast Early China Roundtable annual meeting. Western Kentucky University. (November 2013)
- “Ethnicity, Politics, and Religion in the Nanzhao Kingdom (649-903).” Southeast Early China Roundtable annual meeting. Berea College. (November 2012)
- “Intersections of Ethnicity and Gender in the *Tale of Woman Huang* in Dali, Yunnan.” Feminist Sinologies Conference. University of Michigan, Ann Arbor (October 2012)
- “Woman Huang and Blood Bowl Rituals in Yunnan.” Workshop on gender and ritual pollution in Buddhism. University of Southern California (February 2012)
- “The Transformations of Baijie Shengfei and Mahakala: Religion and Ethnicity in Dali, Yunnan.” AAR Annual Meeting, Atlanta (October 2010)
- “Exceptional Virtue: Ethnicity and Female Sexuality on the Qing Frontier.” AAS Annual Meeting, Philadelphia. (March 2010)
- “Gender and Ethnicity on the Chinese Frontier: The Cult of the Goddess Baijie from the 15th Century to the Present.” WECSOR (AAR West) Annual Meeting, Tempe. (March 2010)
- “Baijie and the Bai: Village Religion and Ethnicity in Contemporary Dali.” International Conference of Anthropological and Ethnological Sciences, Kunming, P.R.C. (July 2009)
- “Ethnicity and Gender in the Cult of the Goddess Baijie.” Stanford Humanities Center, Stanford University. (April 2009)

Invited Lectures

- “Blurred Lines: Buddhism in the Chinese Borderlands.” University of Kentucky. (November 2014)
- “Religion and Ethnicity in Dali, Yunnan.” Shanghai University and UTK Joint Forum on China, University of Tennessee, Knoxville. (October 2010)
- “Who Is Baijie Shengfei? Reconsidering External Influences on Dali Buddhism (937-1253).” Ho Center for Buddhist Studies, Stanford University. (March 2009)

LANGUAGE SKILLS

Mandarin Chinese, Japanese, Bai; reading knowledge of Classical Chinese and French

TEACHING

University of Tennessee, Knoxville

Seminar in East Asian Religions
Buddhism in the Americas
East Asian Buddhism in Asia and North America
Zen Buddhism
Religions of China
Religions of Japan
Introduction to the Religions of Asia
Method and Theory in Religious Studies
World Religions in History
Comparison of World Religions

Stanford University

Instructor

Buddhism and Gender, Spring 2010

Co-Instructor

Religion and the Family in East Asia, Winter 2004

Teaching Assistant

Religion and Music of India, Fall 2004
Introduction to Zen, Spring 2003 and Spring 2004

ACADEMIC AWARDS AND FELLOWSHIPS

ACLS Fellowship, 2016-17

SARIF grant, 2013

Alumni Outstanding Teaching Award, University of Tennessee, Knoxville, 2013

Award of Excellence, Tennessee Association of Museums, for the exhibit "Zen
Buddhism and the Arts of Japan," 2013

Doctoral Fellow, Ho Center for Buddhist Studies, Stanford University, 2008-2010

Geballe Dissertation Fellow, Stanford Humanities Center, Stanford University, 2008-
2009

Graduate Dissertation Fellow, Michelle R. Clayman Institute for Gender Research,
Stanford University 2008-2009

Charlotte W. Newcombe Doctoral Dissertation Fellowship (declined), 2008-2009

Departmental Fellowship, Department of Religious Studies, Stanford University, 2002-
2007

SERVICE

University

Head, Cultures and Civilizations Sub-Committee (2015-)

Campus Fulbright Interviews (Fall 2015)

Alumni Outstanding Teacher Award Committee (Spring 2014)

Cultures and Civilizations Sub-Committee (2013- 2015)

College

Dean's Advisory Council (2015-2016)
Organizer, "Centers and Peripheries in East Asia" Faculty Research Seminar (2014-2015)
Teaching Council (2014- 2015)

Department

Advising Committee (2014-2016)
Curriculum Committee (2013-14)
Religious Studies Association Faculty Advisor (2013-2016)
Library Representative (2013- 2014)
Organizer, Department Seminar (2011-2012)

Professional

Co-chair, Chinese Religions Group, American Academy of Religion (2015-)
Steering Committee, Seminar on Economics and Capitalism in the Study of Buddhism,
American Academy of Religion (2015-)
Boren Scholarship Review Panel, Institute for International Education (2015)
Manuscript referee, *Journal of Chinese Buddhist Studies*, *International Journal of Asian Studies*

Community Outreach

Co-led teacher inservice on *Embodying Enlightenment* exhibit. McClung Museum,
University of Tennessee, Knoxville. (September 29, 2015)
Public address to Destination Imagination's Chinese contingent on behalf of University
of Tennessee Confucius Institute. (May, 2015)
University of Tennessee Confucius Institute Student Ambassador selection committee,
2014-2015
"Religion and Communism in Modern China." Walters State Community College.
(October 7, 2013)
"Grandmothers and Gods: Women Reviving Religion in Contemporary China." Walters
State Community College. (October 2, 2012)
"From Zen Art to Zen and the Art of Motorcycle Maintenance." McClung Museum,
University of Tennessee, Knoxville. (September 23, 2012)
"Funeral Objects, Object Funerals: Materiality in East Asian Buddhist Mortuary Ritual."
Tyson House, University of Tennessee, Knoxville. (November 10, 2011)
"Introduction to Religion in China." Pellissippi State Community College. (October 27,
2011)