



Public Lecture

Finding happiness in samsara? Training the mind outside the Buddhist meditation hall

Abstract

Can traditional Buddhist meditation techniques be applied to modern ways of living outside the monastery? Mindfulness has become a widely followed form of “meditation” outside the meditation hall. There are mindfulness sessions offered even at public schools and universities. Other techniques from the Buddhist toolbox of mental and emotional emancipation are applied in therapies aiming at “wisdom” in everyday life. Buddhists claim no copyright on such techniques. The original soteriological aim of overcoming samsara is not anymore an aim. It has been argued that the practice of mindfulness can even lead to the opposite effect: to make one appreciate and love samsara more instead of overcoming it.

The lecture will take up these issues and discuss them against the background of some of the major strands of meditation in the Buddhist traditions. A focus will be on the crucial question of whether a solid moral foundation and ethical motivation can support an effective meditative practice. A joint research project on this issue by the universities of Jerusalem and Hamburg has recently been started.

When

Tuesday, 17 September 2019
6pm–8pm

Where

John Woolley Lecture Theatre S325
John Woolley Building (A20)
Manning Rd, University of Sydney
NSW 2006 Camperdown

Related Events

1. Lecture Series: “All living beings have Buddha-nature”:
The early history of the concept of universal Buddhahood
Every Thursday from 15 August 2019 until 12 September
2019 6pm–7pm at the John Woolley Lecture Theatre S325
**Please note that the lecture on 22 August will take place
at the Teachers College Lecture Theatre 306**

2. Workshop: The “one-vehicle” (*ekayāna*) theory of the
Lotus Sutra on Friday 23 August 2019 & Friday 30 August
2019 10am – 4pm at the John Woolley Tutorial Room S334
CRICOS 00026A



Prof. Michael Zimmermann studied Classical Indology, Tibetology and Japanology at the University of Hamburg and earned his doctorate with a thesis on the origin of the teaching of buddha-nature in India. He spent several years at universities in Kyoto and Tokyo and later worked for the German Research Foundation in Hamburg and Kathmandu. After four years in the Department of Religious Studies at the University of Stanford, in 2007 he became professor for Indian Buddhism at the Asien-Afrika-Institut of the University of Hamburg, one of Europe’s largest research institutions dealing with Asian languages and cultures.

His research focus is Indian Mahayana Buddhism in all its forms of expression, but in particular its textual history based on the canonical traditions in India, Tibet and China. Another of his interests are the developments regarding contemporary Buddhism in East and West. Zimmermann co-directs the Numata Center for Buddhist Studies at Hamburg University, an institutional hub promoting teaching, research, dialogue, academic exchange and public outreach.

UBEF Visiting Professor of Buddhist Studies

Prof. Michael Zimmerman is the 8th holder of the University Buddhist Education Foundation (UBEF) Visiting Professorship in Buddhist Studies. This Professorship was established at the University of Sydney in 2009 through the generosity of the UBEF for the purpose of sponsoring an extended visit to Sydney of a distinguished international scholar in any field of Buddhist Studies, in order to expose students and academics to current trends in research and to raise the profile of Buddhist Studies in Australia. It is administered by the Department of Indian Subcontinental Studies in the School of Languages and Cultures.