

Spring 2020 Arts of Asia Lecture Series

Visions of the Afterlife in Asia

Sponsored by the Society for Asian Art

Pure Land, Hell, or Extinction?

Buddhist Visions of the Hereafter on the Silk Road

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States/Periods

Tang Dynasty (618–907 CE)

Tibetan (Tubo 吐蕃) Empire (7th–9th c.)

Kocho/Qocho (mid 9th–mid 12th c., vassalized by the Kara Khitai)

Five Dynasties (907–960)

Song Dynasty (960–1279)

Tangut Empire (1038–1227)

Silk Road Sites

Hexi 河西 Corridor

Dunhuang 敦煌

Karakhoto

Mogao 莫高 Grottoes

Yulin 榆林 Grottoes

Tarim Basin

Taklamakan Desert

Bezeklik Grottoes

Kizil Grottoes

Deities and Historical Figures

Amitābha, Amitāyus buddhas

Avalokiteśvara bodhisattva

Mahāsthāmaprāpta bodhisattva

Yinlu 引路 bodhisattva

Shandao (Shan T'ao) 善導 (613–631)

Other terms

jingtu 淨土: pure land

Sukhāvātī: Land of Bliss; the western pure land

buddhānusmṛti/nianfo 念佛: chanting the name, recalling the characteristics of the Buddha

bianwen 變文: “transformation tales,” a medieval literary genre

bianxiang 變相: “transformation tableaux,” a medieval pictorial genre

laiying tu 來迎圖: “coming to welcome,” a Pure Land pictorial genre

Suggested Reading

Anne Ning Feng, *Water, Ice, Lapis Lazuli: The Metamorphosis of Pure Land Art in Tang China*, PhD Dissertation (University of Chicago, 2018).

Zsuzsanna Gulácsi, "The Manichaeic Roots of a Pure Land Banner from Kocho (III 4524) in the Asian Art Museum, Berlin," in Zs. Gulácsi (ed.), *Language, Society, and Religion in the World of the Turks: Festschrift for Larry Clark at Seventy-Five* (Silk Road Studies 19), Turhout: Brepols, 2018, pp. 337-376.

Hisao Inagaki with Harold Steward, *The Three Pure Land Sutras*, 2nd edn. (Berkeley, CA: Bukkyō Dendō Kyōkai and Numata Center for Buddhist Translation and Research, 2003).

Charles B. Jones, *Chinese Pure Land Buddhism: Understanding a Tradition of Practice* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2019).

Sonya S. Lee, *Surviving Nirvana: Death of the Buddha in Chinese Visual Culture* (Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press, 2011).

Julian Pas, *Visions of Sukhāvātī: Shan-Tao's Commentary on the Kuan Wu-Liang-Shou-Fo Ching* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1995).

Stephen F. Teiser, *Reinventing the Wheel: Paintings of Rebirth in Medieval Buddhist Temples*, Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2007.

Eugene Y. Wang, "Pure Land Art," *Encyclopedia of Buddhism*, vol. 2, ed. Robert Buswell (New York: Macmillan, 2003), 693-698.

Dorothy C. Wong, "Four Sichuan Buddhist Steles and the Beginnings of Pure Land Imagery in China," *Archives of Asian Art*, Vol. 51 (1998/1999), 56-79.

Wu Hung, "Reborn in Paradise: A Case Study of Dunhuang Sutra Painting and its Religious, Ritual and Artistic Context," *Orientalism* (1992).