

Reflect

THE OXFORD CENTRE FOR BUDDHIST STUDIES
ANNUAL REVIEW 2015

The Oxford Centre for Buddhist Studies promotes the study of Buddhist texts, societies, theories and practices. It is a Recognised Independent Centre (RIC) of the University of Oxford and was established in 2004.



WE NEED YOU
to help secure the future
of scholarly interaction
with Buddhism.

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Collaborative partners

The OCBS holds Memoranda of Understanding with the Institute of Oriental Philosophy – Japan, FoGuang University – Taiwan, the Chinese University of Hong Kong, and the Dhammachai International Research Institute and Dhammachai Education Foundation.

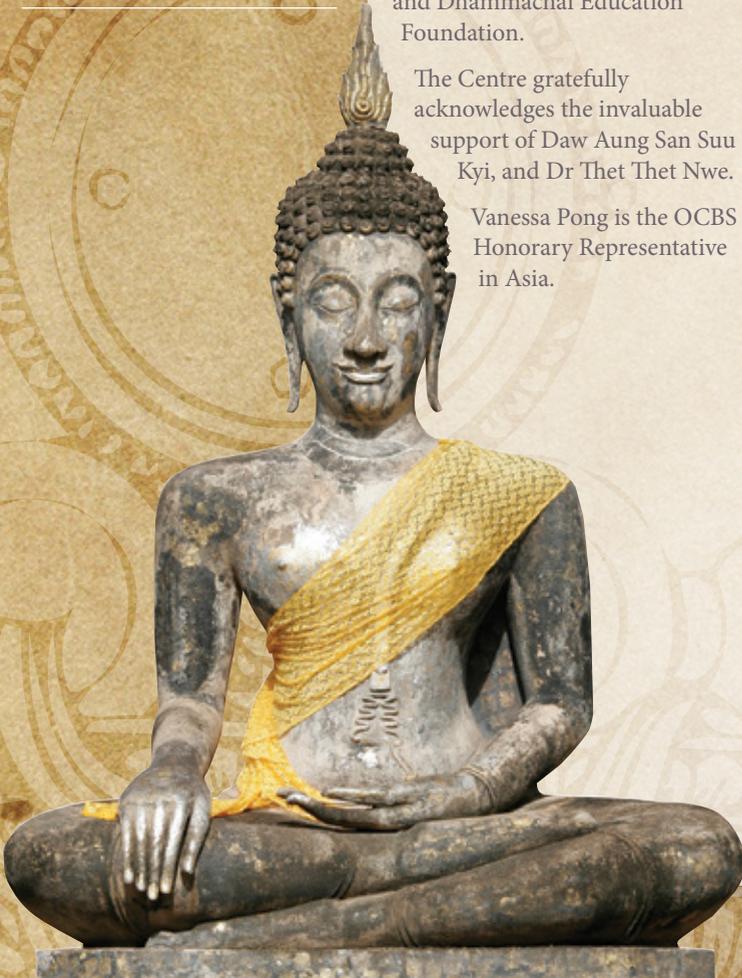
The Centre gratefully acknowledges the invaluable support of Daw Aung San Suu Kyi, and Dr Thet Thet Nwe.

Vanessa Pong is the OCBS Honorary Representative in Asia.

Oxford University

Oxford has long been an international leader in teaching Sanskrit and Pali. When Professor Richard Gombrich retired in 2004 he had supervised 50 research degrees at the University, the great majority of those in Buddhist studies completed in the UK over the past generation. He then founded the OCBS to carry on this tradition. In addition, the Bodleian Library's world class collection of Buddhist texts in Sanskrit, Pali, Tibetan and Chinese and the Ashmolean Museum's great collection of Buddhist art make Oxford fertile ground for Buddhist scholarship.

Add in the Numata Chair of Buddhist Studies, and Oxford is becoming a world centre for the academic study of all aspects of Buddhism. The OCBS is committed to providing a climate for this work to flourish, thereby nurturing the next generation of scholars of Buddhism.



Director's message



2013 saw two milestones in our progress. The University's Committee for Recognised Independent Centres produced a glowing report on what had been achieved since our founding. And the new Numata Professor of Buddhist Studies, the sinologist Stefano Zacchetti, arrived to give us a new lease of life. A primary aim of founding our centre was to support and supplement the work of whoever held this chair, the only fully endowed chair in Buddhist Studies in Europe. Prof. Zacchetti has agreed to be my deputy as Academic Director and Chair of the Centre. Even more important, he brings to us expertise in Chinese Buddhism, and thus gives us far greater academic breadth. This in turn enables us at last to teach a graduate course in Buddhist Studies based on knowledge of Buddhist languages. The first two-year M.Phil course began in October 2015.

In my previous message I wrote that "we are seeking to build the OCBS as a global collaborative that combines Buddhist Studies with the translation of discoveries into practical solutions." In November 2014 we took a major step in this direction. In collaboration with the Indian Institute for Buddhist Studies, we held in Pune a three-day international conference entitled "Buddhism rejoins the great conversation in India." In fact we aimed to reactivate two great conversations: that between Buddhism and the rest of India, notably the family of traditions we call "Hinduism", and that between the followers of Dr Ambedkar and the many other Buddhist groups in India today. Further details can be found on page 8.

The OCBS aims to achieve a convergence of a thorough secular study of Buddhism, as it is emerging into engagement with the modern world, with the translation and communication of that knowledge into applications for contemporary life – personal, family, community and global. That will involve digging deeply to learn and understand, but also reaching out to engage and teach, both academically and practically. We aim to maintain and improve the rigorous study of Buddhism in all its forms.

We look forward to your joining us in this adventure.

PROFESSOR RICHARD GOMBRICH
DIRECTOR, OXFORD CENTRE FOR BUDDHIST STUDIES
richard.gombrich@balliol.ox.ac.uk

"The OCBS provides me with invaluable support and is an important part of developing the field of Buddhist Studies at the University of Oxford."

PROFESSOR ZACCHETTI
NUMATA CHAIR OF
BUDDHIST STUDIES

Highlights of the past year



Our Journal has state-of-the-art electronic delivery and has many subscribers, including prominent universities in the US, Europe and Asia.



The continuation of Adult Outreach activities with informal classes held by one of our Fellows.



Two free supplements to the Journal are available on our website: *The Authenticity of the Early Buddhist Texts* and *Nature and the Environment in Early Buddhism*.



Publication of a new volume in the OCBS Monograph series – *Buddhist Monks and the Politics of Lanka's Civil War* – Suren Raghavan.



Over 20 worldwide scholars in Buddhist Studies brought to Oxford for lectures, seminars, and research work.



The future of Pali scholarship enhanced through another full capacity Pali Summer School (a thorough grounding in the language).



Support of students in Buddhist Studies at Oxford through the awarding of two Student Grants.

The OCBS remains committed to disseminating the fruits of scholarship at Oxford to the wider world and has been doing so in the following ways:



Lecture Series

Our local mailings and our newsletter ensure that all in the Oxford area are informed of lectures that the OCBS is holding.



Podcasts

All suitable lectures delivered at the OCBS are uploaded on our website as audio files. This ensures that people can listen at no cost anywhere in the world provided they have internet capability.



Journal

Our journal operates a policy of publishing articles which are both of a high academic standard and intelligible to anyone interested in Buddhism. All issues become open access after one year.



Archive

The website now holds articles by our associates, and has begun the project of holding an online archive of all of Richard Gombrich's articles.



Library

Our entire catalogue will soon be listed online for the future operation of a postal lending system.

DID YOU KNOW?

£10,000 pays for our librarian for one year.

OCBS research

The Application of Compassion: more Pragmatism than Mysticism.

Compassion in Public Life

The Buddha's ethics created a new view of society. He saw violence as the most urgent problem in public life. He was justly famous for his power to persuade and conciliate. Yet few Buddhist countries today can be claimed as models of peace and harmony. Why?

Our project is to explore and try to explain why Sri Lanka and the Buddhist countries of SE Asia have recently seen monks involved in violence, and what might change this behaviour.

We have held a weekend conference on Buddhism and religious minorities, with sessions on Sri Lanka, Myanmar, Thailand and Bangladesh. Our Research Fellow Dr. Suren Raghavan has published a book "Buddhist Monks and the Politics of Lanka's Civil War".



Prof Rey-Sheng Her



Organised compassion by and for individuals

What has become known in the West as "Engaged Buddhism" began in the 1920s in China, where it is still called "Humanistic Buddhism". The three best known Buddhist movements in Taiwan today, while they differ greatly, are all rooted in humanistic Buddhism. All have become international. One of our Research Fellows, Dr. Yu-Shuang Yao, has published an acclaimed book on Tzu Chi ("Compassionate Relief"), which was founded as a medical charity in Taiwan in 1966 by a Buddhist nun who still heads the movement. Tzu Chi is now active worldwide in disaster relief. Remarkably, the Chinese government has welcomed Tzu Chi's activities; apparently it sees Tzu Chi as an ethical, not a religious, movement.

Dr Yao and Prof Gombrich are jointly doing research into contemporary developments in Buddhism which originate in Taiwan. The OCBS has recently signed a memorandum of Understanding with the Chinese University of Hong Kong; two professors there are pursuing similar interests in mainland China, and we hope that this can broaden the scope of our analysis.

Compassion serves both societies and private spiritual ends

Our Pune conference brought home to us that while Buddhism in the modern West is primarily practised as a spiritual movement which emphasises meditation to gain a better life now and improved prospects for rebirth, others (often from cultures with an older Buddhist tradition) see Buddhism as a lever for social change and a practice which enriches the lives of individuals through their personal involvement in helping others materially.

The conference was mainly attended by followers of Dr Ambedkar. Most of them come from a disadvantaged section of society, so it is natural that their emphasis is on social and political action and their concerns have been largely parochial, in contrast to Tzu Chi, which is mainly a middle class movement. Both are predominantly lay movements, but they have not been in touch before. The conference was fascinated by a lecture by Prof Rey-Sheng Her, spokesperson of Tzu Chi, on "Buddhism as Altruism", so we hope the contact may prove fruitful for both sides.

DID YOU KNOW?
Our Monograph series has published 14 titles so far and two more are in the pipeline.

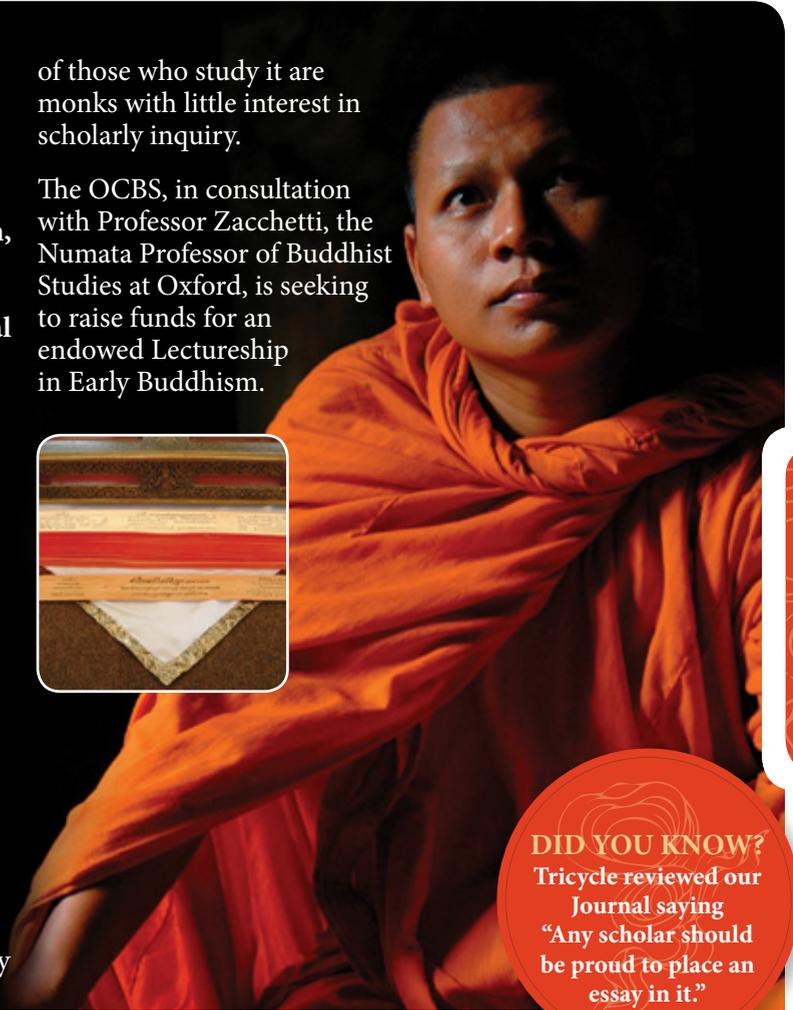
Lectureship in Early Buddhism

Pali is the language of the Tipitaka, known in English as the Pali Canon. This huge collection of texts is our main source for the teachings of early Buddhism, indeed of the Buddha himself. For Theravada Buddhists it is the functional equivalent of the Bible for Christians.

Studying Pali and other relevant early languages should therefore be a top priority for anyone with a serious interest in the Buddha's teaching or in the history of Buddhism. It is unfortunate that Pali is so little studied or understood today. Outside the societies with a long tradition of Theravada Buddhism, in Sri Lanka and SE Asia, there are very few (less than five) university posts in the world devoted to Pali; and even in the Theravada countries many

of those who study it are monks with little interest in scholarly inquiry.

The OCBS, in consultation with Professor Zacchetti, the Numata Professor of Buddhist Studies at Oxford, is seeking to raise funds for an endowed Lectureship in Early Buddhism.



DID YOU KNOW?
Tricycle reviewed our Journal saying "Any scholar should be proud to place an essay in it."



Oxford's History

Oxford's undergraduate course in Sanskrit included a Pali option as long ago as the 1880s. We believe that this was the first undergraduate curriculum to feature Pali in the West. Over the last twelve years, the Centre has ensured the continuation of Pali studies through its annual Pali Summer School, which enables its graduates to read Pali texts by themselves. Richard Gombrich also recently created the first ever Pali opera libretto as part of Jonathan Harvey's "Wagner Dream", performed by the Welsh National Opera. Securing a Lectureship in Early Buddhism builds on this to ensure Pali continues as an important part of the curriculum at Oxford.

Our Pune Conference

DID YOU KNOW?
£4000 allows us to run a workshop on a specific problem.

We are very grateful to Prof Dr Bhalchandra Mungekar, member of the Rajya Sabha and former Vice-Chancellor of Mumbai University, for opening the conference and delivering the keynote address, on Dr Babasaheb Ambedkar.

On the first day, many Buddhist organisations, and some prominent individuals, gave brief presentations to inform us what they are doing in India today. On the second morning, a series of four short lectures illustrated the amazing variety of Buddhist lay movements that exist. On the second afternoon, there were presentations on other oppressed communities across the world who face many of the same issues as the Scheduled Caste Communities in India; this was followed by a lively and spontaneous, but orderly, public discussion, chaired by Dr Fr Gregory Sharkey SJ. The third day was devoted to planning remedial action, especially with regard to education and information.

Finally, Ven Dr Anil Sakya in the chair formulated three resolutions and put them to the floor. Although the conference gathering had no kind of authority, it is encouraging that all three resolutions were passed by all present with no dissenting voice. The organisers therefore hope that they will bear practical consequences.

1. To found a new society, the Dr. Ambedkar Compassionate Society for SC/ST/DT/NT (oppressed people outside SaVarna Society), to be run by the Ambedkarite movement but to concern itself with other oppressed communities as well, and to defend both members of those communities against injustice, and Buddhism itself against attack and discrimination.
2. That that society will have an active website, which will include current news about its concerns (both the atrocities and defence against them), as well as

other matters of interest to the community and its educational and cultural concerns.

3. That under the auspices of that same society, and of the OCBS, we shall do all we can to promote translation into Marathi and Hindi of the Pali Canon and the works of Dr Ambedkar, and also of other materials which Ambedkarites may want to study, and also to promote the publication of Dr Ambedkar's writings in a more accessible form, both on the internet and in print publications costing nothing or very little.

Pravin Bhalesain, founder and director of the Indian Institute of Buddhist Studies, prepared the conference and ran it throughout, and it was mainly financed by the Bhalesain Family Foundation.



Prof Dr Mungekar inaugurates the conference



L-R Pravin Bhalesain, Fr Greg Sharkey, Prof Gombrich

MPhil in Buddhist Studies at Oxford University

The University has now launched its MPhil in Buddhist Studies. This two-year degree aims to give a comprehensive training in one of the main Buddhist canonical languages, along with in-depth explorations of Buddhist history, philosophy, and literature.

This is a major milestone in Buddhist Studies at Oxford, and sets the ground for further growth in this area at the University.

Full details at
www.ox.ac.uk/admissions/graduate/courses/mphil-buddhist-studies



DID YOU KNOW?
The OCBS is supported
by a team of up to ten
volunteers at a time.

Financial statement

year ending 31st March 2015

The OCBS completed the financial year ending March 2015 with £29,973 in reserves, a decline of £10,704 on 2013/4. With annual expenditures of £78,957, the reserves represent approximately 4.5 months of operating costs. Whilst the Board regards this as satisfactory in the current funding climate, the objective remains to increase reserves to the equivalent of one year's operating expenditures in order to provide greater security for continued operations of the OCBS.

Income Statement	Restricted funds	Unrestricted funds	2015	2014
Incoming Resources				
Voluntary Income		40,521	40,521	64,618
Activities for generating funds	5,770	22,588	28,358	17,735
Investment Income		4	4	25
Total Incoming Resources			68,883	82,378
Resources Expended				
Cost of generating voluntary income		(4,331)	(4,331)	(2,247)
<i>Charitable activities</i>				
Education	(8,758)	(64,505)	(73,263)	(64,158)
<i>Governance costs</i>		(1,363)	(1,363)	(1,285)
<i>Other Resources Expended</i>				
Total Resources Expended	(8,758)	(70,199)	(78,957)	(67,690)
Net Income/Expenditure	(2,988)	(7,086)	(10,704)	14,688
Total Funds Brought Forward	6,138	33,909	40,047	25,359
Total Funds Carried Forward	3,150	26,823	29,973	40,047

Balance Sheet	2015	2014
Fixed Assets	850	480
Current Assets		
Debtors	2,895	4,678
Cash at bank & in hand	32,398	38,485
Total	35,293	43,163
Creditors (within 1 year)	(6,170)	(3,596)
Net assets	29,973	40,047
Funds		
Unrestricted funds	26,823	33,909
Restricted funds	3,150	6,138
Total Funds	29,973	40,047

This financial summary is taken from the annual report and financial statements of the OCBS for the year ending 31st March 2015, approved by the Board of Trustees.

Financial realities of the OCBS

Core Funding

£2.5 million endows the Centre's core running costs for perpetuity.

£80,000 covers core costs for one year.

Target Funding

£6,000 pays for the Pali Summer School for one year.

£20,000 pays for a part time Academic Director for one year.

£9,000 per year allows us to employ a Research Administrator or an Events and Outreach Manager.

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The Centre wishes to thank The Staples Trust, Dr. Thet Thet Nwe, The Institute of Oriental Philosophy, FoGuang University, The Oxford Buddha Vihara, The Doris Field Charitable Trust and The Pye Charitable Settlement for their generous support.

DID YOU KNOW?
The Centre provides one to one support in reading texts with students from all over the world.

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