

DOTTORATO DI INTERESSE NAZIONALE IN STUDI RELIGIOSI

Ateneo e Dipartimento sede della borsa: Università Ca' Foscari Venezia, Dipartimento di Studi sull'Asia e sull'Africa Mediterranea

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Titolo del progetto formativo della borsa di dottorato: Buddhism and Technological Innovation: Historical and Modern Case Studies

Descrizione del progetto formativo della borsa di dottorato

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Supervisore aziendale: Dr. Filippo Scianna

Buddhism is flourishing on the Internet and digital media. Still, the form and usage patterns of Buddhist media technologies have varied considerably from the earliest oral texts to the latest online versions of the Buddhist canon. Are these changes to be welcomed or not? Technology is ubiquitous in almost every aspect of contemporary life, from mobile technology and social media to robotics and automation. While technology and its development might appear to have little common ground with religion, they have long been associated. For instance, we can think of book cultures throughout the Buddhist world in terms of technological transformation. Buddhist books are not only media for communication but also ritual objects and symbols of political authority. Today, with the ever-increasing presence of media technology in the world of religious practitioners, this is a relevant topic for Buddhists across the globe. Historically and now, Buddhists have asked the extent to which technological transformation can benefit human beings, and what role, if any, Buddhism might have to play in these processes.

We welcome PhD projects that respond to the questions posed by the modern realities of robotics and artificial intelligence as well as by those of the past, including, for instance, pre-modern printing technology. We also welcome proposals that study the communicative fabric of the social media life of Buddhist clerics and their followers and that shed light on the role that digital technology plays in the processes of re-articulation of their relationship with practitioners.

We propose the following list of topics but are also open to other proposals:

- The form and usage patterns of Buddhist media technologies, from oral texts to online versions of the Buddhist canon
- Monastic use of social media in East Asia
- Buddhist media technologies in a historical perspective
- Buddhism and robotics East Asia
- Buddhist responses to artificial intelligence
- Buddhism and print culture in East Asia
- Buddhism and print culture in Southeast Asia
- Buddhist book cultures
- Buddhism, media technologies and philanthropy in China and Taiwan
- Buddhist online communities in comparative perspective
- Buddhism and Posthumanism / Transhumanism
- Buddhist responses to artificial intelligence, with specific reference to Zen

The scholarship will be offered to candidates that respond to the key requisites of the PNRR framework (environmental sustainability, sustainable development, equal opportunity and access to people with (dis)abilities) supported by Ca' Foscari University and the Department of Asian and North African Studies in collaboration with

Ubiliber, the publishing company of Unione Buddhista Italiana (UBI). In particular, PHD candidates are expected to work to a high standard of language fluency in one or more Asian languages as well as English for academic purposes. The scholarship will include a minimum of six month textual and/or fieldwork training in collaboration with Ubiliber and the Unione Buddhista Italiana, and a minimum of six months to eighteen months training in a designated site outside of Italy, conducting fieldwork or research with a host university or other relevant institution. The University upholds the principles and practices of “Open science” e “FAIR Data”.

Buddhism and Technological Innovation: Historical and Modern Case Studies

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