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Friday, December 18th, 18:00h

Marcus Bingenheimer SPEAKER

Going on Pilgrimage in 19th Century China

The itinerary network in the
Canxue zhijin 參學知津

Around 1826 the monk Ruhai Xiancheng 如海顯承 wrote a route book of China's most popular pilgrimage routes for his fellow monks: "Knowing the Paths of Pilgrimage" (*Canxue zhijin*). This is a rare source for the travel routes of Buddhists in late imperial times as it describes, station by station, 56 pilgrimage itineraries all over China, many converging on famous mountains and urban centres. Its prefaces and essays complement this practical information by explaining why and how 19th century monks went on pilgrimage. Although the text was published without maps, the main stations for each route have now been geo-referenced so that maps of the pilgrimage network can be produced.

The talk will present preliminary results of the ongoing project, discuss the history of the book and the overall characteristics of the pilgrimage network. Notably, though the majority of the destinations are Buddhist sites such as Mt.Wutai, Mt.Emei or Mt.Putuo, Xiancheng also described routes to the traditional five sacred mountains, popular Daoist sites such as Mt. Wudang, or Mt. Luofu, and even famous Confucian localities, such as Qufu. He also visited sites of scenic, historical or literary interest, such as the grave of Zhu Geliang, or locations associated with the novel *Xiyouji* in northern Jiangsu. In other words, the routes in "Knowing the Paths of Pilgrimage" traverse not only the country's geography, but also the full spectrum of sacred places in China.

Marcus Bingenheimer 馬德偉 obtained an MA (Sinology) and a Dr.phil (History of Religions) degree from Würzburg University and an MA (Communication Studies) from Nagoya University. He teaches in the Department of Religion at Temple University (Philadelphia) and is currently visiting research fellow at Nagoya University. From 2005 to 2011 he taught Buddhism and Digital Humanities in Taiwan, where he also supervised various projects concerning the digitization of Buddhist culture. His main research interests are the history of Buddhism in East Asia and early Buddhist sutra literature. Next to that, Marcus Bingenheimer is interested in the Digital Humanities and how to do research in the age of digital information.

This lecture will be held at the Institute for Research in Humanities (IRH), Kyoto University (seminar room 1, 1st floor).

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