

## **Creating the World of East Asian Buddhism: The Hangzhou Region and the Spread of Buddhism throughout East Asia**

Instructor: Albert Welter, East Asian Studies

### Course Description:

How did China become a center of the Buddhist world? How did Hangzhou, a city south of present-day Shanghai that most westerners have never heard of, become the hub of East Asian Buddhism? This course answers these questions provides an introduction to Sino-centric Buddhism, which accounts for more than 50% of Buddhists in the world today.

Hangzhou, in fact, is the capital of a region that has long figured in the western imagination. It first gained notoriety in the west through the travel record of the Venetian explorer, Marco Polo, who visited in the late 13<sup>th</sup> century, describing it as “without a doubt the finest and most splendid city in the world.” An oft-repeated Chinese proverb echoes Marco Polo’s sentiment: “Above, the palaces of Heaven; below, [the cities of] Suzhou and Hangzhou.” Polo’s writings inspired, among others, Christopher Columbus, who upon reading Polo’s travel diaries, set out to establish a sea-trade route to China and its legendary riches. Columbus died believing that he had reached the shores of India, close to his goal, leaving a legacy of false nomenclature that survives to this day. The Lewis and Clark expedition, the search for the northwest passage, the acquiring of Pacific territories, the transcontinental railroad, etc., are testimony to the legacy and impact of China and Hangzhou on the imagination on the Western and American consciousness.

Long before Hangzhou inspired the western imagination, it became an important commercial and cultural hub in China and the East Asian region. It came to special prominence in the tenth century, when Hangzhou (known as Qiantang) served as the capital of the quasi-independent kingdom of Wuyue (893-979). Later, when the imperial court was forced to flee south from advancing Jurchen invaders, it became the capital of the Southern Song dynasty under its current name, Hangzhou, between 1127-1279, when its influence became particularly pronounced.

This course looks at how the greater Hangzhou region (Jiangnan) imagined new forms of Buddhism that changed the nature and character of Chinese and East Asian Buddhism. They were especially instrumental, for example, in the spread of Chan Buddhism to Japan as Zen and to Korea as Sŏn. This was particularly true of Japan, where it served as a model for a new framework of state-supported monasteries, the so-called Five Mountains system that became prevalent in the Kamakura (1185-1333) and Muromachi (1336-1573) periods.

The present course explores multiple dimensions of Hangzhou Buddhist culture and the impact of its spread across the East Asian region, focusing on leading figures and monuments, and the developments they inspired in the creation, transmission, and development of a uniquely East Asian Buddhism. Topics covered include:

- Introduction to Mahayana Buddhism and an Introduction to the Hangzhou Region,
- The Indian Buddhist *Imaginaire* in Hangzhou; Mapping and marking Buddhist sacred space: Hangzhou rulers as *cakravartin* (Kings who Turn the Wheel of Buddhist Law),
- Histories of Hangzhou relic veneration through two of its most enduring monuments: Yongming Stūpa and Leifeng Pagoda,
- The Japanese connection (Zen Masters as Construction Entrepreneurs and Japanese Buddhist Tea Culture)
- the Korean connection (the Korean Temple in Hangzhou and Korean Tea Culture).

The course is, in part, indebted to the Khyentse Foundation and its generous support of the Hangzhou Buddhist Culture Project.

Course length: 5 weeks

Class length: 2 hours/week

### Preliminary Course Outline

Week	Topic
1	<p><b>Introduction: Reevaluating the models for studying East Asian Buddhism, Hangzhou as Center of East Asian Buddhism</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Welter, “The Hangzhou Region and the Spread of East Asian Buddhism”, in Welter, Park, and Heine, <i>Approaches to Chan, Sōn, and Zen Studies: Chinese Chan Buddhism and Its Spread throughout East Asia</i> (Albany NY: State University of New York Press, 2022, in press; manuscript pdf).</li> </ul>
2	<p><b>Reimagining the Dharma: The Conceptual Reframing of East Asian Buddhism</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Welter, “Hangzhou Buddhism in Historical Perspective,” in Welter <i>A Tale of Two Stūpas Diverging Paths in the Revival of Buddhism in Hangzhou China</i> (Oxford University Press, 2022, in press, manuscript pdf.).</li> </ul>
3	<p><b>“A special transmission within the scriptures”: Yongming Yanshou and the character of Hangzhou Buddhism</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Welter, <i>Yongming Yanshou’s Notion of Chan in the Zongjing lu</i> (Oxford University Press, 2011), (excerpts, pdf).</li> </ul>
4	<p><b>The Japanese Connection</b></p> <p><b>Zen Master as Construction Entrepreneur: The impact in Japan</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Welter, “Zen Master as Construction Entrepreneur and Preserver of Dharma: Eisai’s experience of Song Dynasty Chan in the Hangzhou Region,” in Jean-Noël Robert, Zhao Chang and Ishii Seijun, eds., <i>Song Dynasty Chan: Interdisciplinary Perspectives on an East Asian Buddhist Tradition</i> (Paris: Collège de France, 2022, in press, manuscript pdf.).</li> </ul> <p><b>Recommended Reading:</b>  <b>Buddhist Tea Culture and “Nourishing Life”</b>  <b>The Health of Nations: The Metaphysics of Tea in Medieval Japan</b></p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>James Benn, “Tea Comes to Japan: Eisai’s <i>Kissa yōjōki</i>,” in Benn, <i>Tea in China: A Religious and Cultural History</i> (University of Hawaii Press, 2015): 145-171.</li> </ul>
5	<p><b>The Korean Connection</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>“Outline of the Tiantai Fourfold Teachings 天台四教儀,” compiled by the Goryeo Śramaṇa Chegwan 高麗沙門諦觀, translated by A. Charles Muller; <a href="http://www.acmuller.net/kor-bud/sagyoui.html">www.acmuller.net/kor-bud/sagyoui.html</a></li> <li>Ŭich’ŏn and the Korean Temple in Hangzhou</li> <li>Korean Tea Culture</li> </ul>

### Instructor Biography

Albert Welter’s area of academic study is Chinese Buddhism, and he has published in the area of Japanese Buddhism as well. His main research focuses on the study of Buddhist texts in the transition from the late Tang (9<sup>th</sup> century) to the Song dynasty (10<sup>th</sup>-13<sup>th</sup> centuries). In recent years, he has published *Monks, Rulers, and Literati: The Political Ascendancy of Chan Buddhism* (Oxford, 2006), *The Linji lu and the Creation of Chan Orthodoxy: The Development of Chan’s Records of Sayings Literature* (Oxford, 2008), and *Yongming Yanshou’s Conception of Chan in the Zongjing lu: A Special Transmission within the Scriptures* (Oxford, 2011), in addition to numerous articles. His work also encompasses Buddhist interactions with Neo-Confucianism and literati culture. He recently finished a project on the social and institutional history of Buddhism as conceived through a text compiled in the early Song dynasty, *Zanning’s Topical History of the Buddhist Clergy*, (Cambria Press, 2018). Stemming from this latter research interest, Professor Welter has also developed a broader interest in Chinese administrative policies toward religion, including Chinese notions of secularism and their impact on religious beliefs and practices, leading to a co-edited volume (with Jeffrey Newmark), *Religion, Culture, and the Public Sphere in China and Japan* (Palgrave-Macmillan, 2017). His recently received funding from the Khyentse Foundation for a project, “The Hangzhou Region and the Creation of East Asian Region,” in conjunction with Zhejiang University, the Hangzhou Academy of Social Sciences, and the Hangzhou Buddhist Academy. He also received funding from the American Council of Learned Societies (with the support of the Chiang Ching-kuo Foundation) for an international conference, “Creating the World of Chan/ Sŏn /Zen: Chinese Chan Buddhism and its Spread throughout East Asia.” Before coming to the University of Arizona, Dr. Welter was based in Canada, where his research projects were regularly supported by the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada. He currently has three manuscripts under review: *Creating the World of Chan/ Sŏn /Zen: Chinese Chan Buddhism and its Spread throughout East Asia* (SUNY, co-edited with Steven Heine and Jin Y. Park), *A Tale of Two Stūpas: Histories of Hangzhou relic veneration through two of its most enduring monuments* (Oxford); and *The Future of China’s Past: Reflections on the Meaning of China’s Rise* (SUNY), based on a previous HSP course he taught.