



Relief representing monks paying homage to a pillar, cuboid dice from a *torana* architrave, Phanigiri (courtesy of Dept. of Archaeology and Museums, Govt. of Telangana)

On the formation and self-representation of Buddhist monastic orders (*nikāya*) in ancient South Asia

Guest lecture by Prof. Dr. Vincent Tournier (LMU Munich)

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14.00-15.30

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The emergence of 'Buddhist sectarianism' in South Asia has been much discussed since the development of Buddhist Studies in the mid-nineteenth century, with the publication of André Bareau's *Les sectes bouddhiques du Petit Véhicule*, in 1955, marking a major step towards a comprehensive survey of the subject. The English translation of the latter work (University of Hawai'i Press, 2013) has consecrated it as a classic reference work in the field, and a thorough assessment of this contribution and its current relevance is still wanting. Without minimizing the importance of Bareau's work, the subject now deserves to be reconceptualized in several ways. In particular, there has been a general tendency to grant special weight to Buddhist historiographical works that flourished from the 3rd/4th century CE onwards, without paying sufficient attention to the fact that these sources "retrojected" a contemporary landscape onto the hoary past. Similarly, to establish the doctrinal profile of Buddhist *nikāyas*, Bareau and others drew extensively on Sarvāstivādin and Theravādin doxographies, which presented the views of groups they considered heterodox, without systematically confronting these polemical characterizations with the contents of fragmentary scriptures and commentaries emanating from these milieux. Finally, an important body of evidence has been insufficiently scrutinized, namely inscriptions, the systematic study of which is arguably essential for tracing the progressive emergence of *nikāya* identities. The present paper will challenge persistent assumptions about the chronology and processes of identity formation within Buddhist milieux. It will further attempt to outline what an updated history of the *nikāyas* might look like, drawing on my ongoing research on the institutional landscape of the Deccan.

Students, staff and everyone interested is cordially invited.

Prof. Dr. Angelika Malinar