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Vinaya Studies at the 18th Congress of IABS, in Toronto

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Studies of Buddhist monastic literature (*vinaya*) were in full swing at the 18th congress of the International Association of Buddhist Studies (IABS). This should not surprise anyone familiar with the current academic climate within Buddhist studies in the province of Ontario. This year, IABS took place in Toronto, Ontario from August 20th–25th. Having hosted a conference on Buddhist nuns in India, sponsored by the Yehan Numata Buddhist Studies Program (McMaster University and the University of Toronto) just six years earlier, it seems Toronto loves *vinaya*.

This year's congress included three panels and one section discussing this genre of Buddhist literature. Panels on *vinaya* included: 1) "Discipline, Agency, Inquiry: Vinaya Reception in Women's Monastic Communities Past and Present;" 2) "Recent Approaches in Vinaya Studies;" and 3) "Vinaya Commentaries." Moreover, one section of the conference was dedicated to *vinaya* studies.

In particular, scholars working or trained at Hamilton Ontario's McMaster University had a strong involvement in *vinaya* panels.

Joseph LaRose acted as convener for “Recent Approaches,” and Shayne Clarke convened “Vinaya Commentaries.” Clarke and LaRose both delivered papers in their respective panels. LaRose presented “Cows, Leather, Sandals and Monks: Materiality in the *Carmavastu* of the *Mūlasarvāstivādivinaya*.” Clarke delivered “On the Nun-Friendly Vinaya Manuscript Traditions of Bhutan and Their Relationship to Indian Vinaya Commentaries.” In “Recent Approaches,” Christopher Handy gave the paper “Politeness and Propriety in Buddhist Monastic Law: Applying Face Theory to Vinaya Texts.” Christopher Emms made his IABS debut in the “Vinaya Commentaries” panel with “Canonical Vinaya Quotations in the Work of Śākyaprabha.”

With four McMaster affiliated researchers participating in two *vinaya* panels, McMaster University continues to be a powerhouse for the study of Buddhist monastic literature.

An outstanding feature of the “Discipline, Agency, and Inquiry” panel was that it featured two co-presentations. These co-presentations involved two-person teams. One of these presentations, by Ute Hüsken and Tathālokā Therī, dealt with issues around the ceremonial boundaries in place during the ordination of Buddhist nuns. This presentation included both an *emic* and an *etic* perspective, Tathālokā herself having acted as a preceptor within the *saṃgha*. This presentation in particular seemed to spark fruitful discussion between researchers and members of the *saṃgha* present within the audience. I look forward to seeing more co-operative work between *emic* and *etic* approaches to *vinaya* in the future.

Papers in other panels or sections also focused on *vinaya*. Notably, Natchapol Sirisawad, Nicholar Witkowski, and Fumi Yao delivered papers specifically dealing with Buddhist monastic literature, outside of the specified *vinaya* panels. Moreover, a panel entitled “New Trajectories in

the Study of Buddhism and Law” also contained much overlap with the study of *vinaya*.

All-and-all, it was not surprising to see that *vinaya* studies had a strong presence at the 2017 IABS in Toronto. I look forward to seeing what *vinaya* researchers will offer in three years, at the 19th IABS in 2020 in Seoul, South Korea.