

Co-organised by



香港大學美術博物館
University Museum and Art Gallery
The University of Hong Kong

SOCIETY OF FELLOWS
IN THE HUMANITIES



Giuseppe Tucci, his adventurous life, and his scholarly legacy

An academic symposium co-organised by the University of Hong Kong and Italian Cultural Institute and hosted by the University of Hong Kong on 5 August 2022 (online)

Giuseppe Tucci (1894–1984) was one of the few polymaths of the long twentieth century. His scholarship encompasses a wide range of topics that reach well beyond the narrow research field of Tibetology. Since then, the interest of a younger generations of Asian and foreign scholars in both religious and historical studies grew, and Tucci's scholarly field continues to develop and to have impact in academia and beyond.

Bringing together scholars from across the world and from a perspective of cross-cultural exchange, our symposium aims to highlight Tucci's lasting contribution to Buddhist studies, with a particular focus on his leading role in bridging the cultures of the West and East. We also hope to transcend the boundary between the academy and general public by analysing recent developments in Buddhist scholarship that have led to novel cultural as well as artistic expressions in an increasingly globalized world.

Join us for presentation of original and unpublished research on any topic related to Tucci, including his legendary career path, the translation and dissemination of his works in Asia, as well as the academic reassessment of his scholarly contribution. At the symposium, a group of nine scholars in Sinology, Tibetology, linguistics, art history, cross-cultural studies, and the history of the Silk Road discuss Tucci's legacy, as well as the continuous relevance of his mode of research for today's Western Buddhologists who follow in his footsteps by conducting fieldwork in Asian localities.

Online symposium:

5 August 2022 - 2pm to 8pm (8am to 2pm CEST)

No registration required. All welcome.

Zoom link:

<https://hku.zoom.us/j/94560429398?pwd=WG1wT2hjVERxVGlOdKlNVU2dFNjN5dz09>

Meeting ID: 945 6042 9398

Password: 759593

Programme:

2:00pm (HKT)(8:00am CEST): Opening remarks by Florian Knothe and Stefano Fossati

2:15pm (HKT)(8:15 CEST): Opening Keynote Lecture:

Saerji : "*Translating Tucci's Research on Tibetan Art History*"

3:00pm (HKT)(9:00am CEST): 1st panel: Giuseppe Tucci: the Sinologist's texts:

Federica Olivotto : "*Sinologists on the shelves. The roots of a discipline in Giuseppe Tucci's library*"

Daisy Sze Yui Cheung : "*Giuseppe Tucci and Chinese Buddhists*"

4:00pm (HKT)(10:00am CEST): 2nd panel: Giuseppe Tucci the Archaeologist:

Christian Luczanits : "*Tibetan Art in the Eyes of Giuseppe Tucci*"

Luca M. Olivieri : "*Physical repatriation: Tucci, a manuscript, and the beginning of archaeological work of IsMEO in Swat*"

Estelle Atlan : "*There is a sacred tantric Buddhist Land of the Dakinis between Tibet and Oddiyana: Lahaul*"

5:30 - 5.45pm (11.30 - 11.45am CEST): break

5:45pm (HKT)(11.45am CEST): 3rd panel: Giuseppe Tucci: the Sinologist and the Enduring Relevance of his Methodology to Buddhist Studies:

Lorenzo Pizzichemi : "*Climbing Up the Ladder Before Throwing It Away. Giuseppe Tucci and Indian Logic*"

Nicola Bajetta : "*First Steps on the Ladder: Preliminary Remarks on Vidyākaraśānti's Tarkasopāna ('A Ladder to Logic')*"

6.45pm (HKT)(12:45pm CEST): Closing Keynote Lecture:

Klaus-Dieter Mathes : "*In the Footsteps of Giuseppe Tucci through the Himalayan Malla Kingdom in Western Nepal*"

7:30pm (HKT)(1:30pm CEST): Closing remarks by Yunfei Bai and Florian Knothe

Abstracts:

Prof. Saerji (Peking University)

Translating Tucci's Research on Tibetan Art History

Saerji's paper critically reflects on his experience of co-translating Tucci's *Indo-tibetica* from Italian to Chinese. Specifically, this paper revolves around the following three questions. First, in terms of translation strategy, how to accurately render Tucci's Buddhist terminology in a way that both sounds natural in Chinese and is faithful to the original Tibetan religious context?

Second, what to make of Tucci's particular interest in Tibetan Art? In this regard, Saerji argues that Tucci's scholarship on Tibetan art not only epitomizes his humanistic spirit but also forms an integral part of his deep understanding of Euro-Asian cultural history. Third, how to understand Tucci's legacy as an art historian? In this respect, Saerji highlights that Tucci's interdisciplinary methodology is still valid today in that it masterfully balances textual scholarship with iconographical inquiry.

Dr. Daisy Sze Yui Cheung (University of Hamburg)

Giuseppe Tucci and Chinese Buddhists

Much ink has been spilled on Tucci's contributions to Tibetology and our understanding of Indian Buddhism. However, his legacy in the field of Sinology has thus far been overlooked. Tucci was fluent in Chinese and was able to utilize Chinese sources. At the age of twenty, he published his first article on Chinese philosophy. From 1925 to 1930, he taught Chinese (along with Italian and Tibetan) in India both at Visva-Bharati University in Shantiniketan and the University of Calcutta. In 1930, he was appointed the Chair of Chinese at the Oriental Institute in Naples.

Tucci drew on Chinese translations of Indic texts extensively in his studies of Indian Buddhism. He was well informed about Chinese Buddhist studies scholarships in the early 20th century; for example, he cited the Chinese scholar Lü Cheng in his work. He also corresponded with the editors of the Chinese Buddhist journal *Haichaoyin* in 1925, requesting permission to publish *Haichaoyin's* materials in his own journal. Tucci's publications on Indian logic have been translated into Chinese and used by Chinese scholars in their own research.

In her talk, Daisy Cheung will discuss in detail Tucci's interactions and relationships with Chinese Buddhists, his study on the Chinese translations of Indian logical texts, the translation and dissemination of his works in China, and his legacy among Chinese scholars of Buddhist Studies.

Federica Olivotto (ISMEO - International Association for Mediterranean and Oriental Studies)

Sinologists on the shelves. The roots of a discipline in Giuseppe Tucci's library

Federica Olivotto's presentation is concerned with Giuseppe Tucci's library that was donated by the orientalist in 1959 to the library of the former Italian Institute for the Middle and Far East (ISMEO) and is now kept in the "ISIAO Library - Room of African and Oriental collections" at the National Central Library of Rome -, as it not only

forms an important book collection on Asian cultures, but also testifies to Tucci's academic and research activities, as well as to his professional and personal ties. Some of the collection sections are specifically dedicated to China, particularly in areas where lay Tucci's research interests: history, archaeology, art history, philosophy, history of religions, and linguistics. Several volumes contain reading signs, handwritten notes and inserts, additions that inform us about Tucci's method of work and study interests, especially regarding the early stages of his research career, which were geared towards Sinology. Autographs, dedications, and testimonies of eminent sinologists, Italian - mainly those affiliated with the Oriental School of University of Rome "La Sapienza" - and foreign, allow us to outline the relationships that Tucci had with some leading scholars of his time such as Étienne Balazs, Henri Cordier, Jan Julius Lodewijk Duyvendak, Paul Demiéville, Eduard Erkes, Marcel Granet, Robert van Gulik, Louis Hambis, Carl Hentze, Aurel Stein, to name but a few figures. These resources not only provide insights into the development of Sinology in Europe during the first half of the Twentieth Century, but also attest to the pivotal role Tucci assumed in the formation of this burgeoning field.

Dr. Christian Luczanits (School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London)

Tibetan Art in the Eyes of Giuseppe Tucci

There is no doubt that Giuseppe Tucci, whom most of us unfortunately have not had the chance to meet, was a genius. This is also true for his approach to Tibetan art, which still impacts its study greatly today. However, from today's perspective one can postulate two seemingly contradictory but equally valid observations. On the one hand, it is justified to say that the study of Tibetan art only began with his work. On the other hand, it is equally justified to question if Tucci should be called an art historian. In his presentation, Christian Luczanits will address these outwardly contradicting notions using examples from Tucci's fieldwork and seminal study on Tibetan painted scrolls. While the former may have triggered his interest in the arts in the first place, what he has collected during the latter process provide insights into his interests. Together they define his approach and methodology, which first and foremost are text centred and historical.

Dr. Luca M. Olivieri (Ca' Foscari University, Venice)

"Physical repatriation: Tucci, a manuscript, and the beginning of archaeological work of IsMEO in Swat"

The talk explores some lesser-known aspects of Giuseppe Tucci's activities in Pakistan and in Swat in particular. In 1956-1958 Tucci inventively tackled some legal issues when leading excavations in the then princely state of Swat. This talk also rethinks Tucci's method of acquiring artefacts such as an important manuscript on behalf of the government of Pakistan. The manuscript was subsequently published in the Serie Orientale Roma of IsMEO. In both cases, Tucci's approach provided and still provides an important case study for scholars interested in the history of archaeology in Pakistan.

Estelle Atlan (EPHE, PLS Paris University)

There is a sacred tantric Buddhist Land of the Dakinis between Tibet and Oddiyana: Lahaul

Giuseppe Tucci explored the Western Himalayan regions on no less than eight occasions. Two of the many works that resulted from his archaeological expeditions drew specific attention to Tibetan travelers in the region: *Santi e briganti nel Tibet ignoto: diario della spedizione nel Tibet occidentale* (1935), and *Travels of Tibetan Pilgrims in the Swat Valley*, initially published in 1940 by the Greater India Society (Calcutta). The latter features a number of major Tibetan figures who travelled across the Western Himalayas and his work was a ground-breaking analysis of historical travel books; it is still quoted and used as a reference in Tibetological studies of long-distance pilgrimage across the Himalayas. Travelling through the Western Himalayan regions, the pilgrims studied by Tucci set out to reach a country called “Lahul”, today spelled as “Lahaul,” locally known as “Garsha Khandro Ling”, the Sacred Land of the Dakinis. This is a region of high-altitude valleys and a major pilgrimage area that has attracted Buddhist meditators for probably more than a millennium. However, Tucci notes in his book that he struggled with some terms in the travelogues he parsed. It seems that at one point he stumbled on a corrupted word that prevented him from properly identifying Lahul. Moreover, in the same source he also misread the term “rgya ras pa,” associating it to a group of Hindu meditators (cotton clad ascetics), whereas the passage testifies to the presence of a vibrant congregation of Tibetan Buddhist disciples of gTsang pa rgya ras in that place. Overall, and probably owing to misreading of sorts, Tucci suggests in his book that Lahaul was Buddhist but of no significance in the 13th century and he fails to mention the specific features of this Buddhist sacred land. In view of this oversight, Estelle Atlan proposes to complement Tucci's work on Lahaul by re-examining the said sources alongside new materials. In doing so, she casts light on Lahaul's status as an important ancient Buddhist pilgrimage destination.

Dr. Lorenzo Pizzichemi (Università eCampus)

Climbing Up the Ladder Before Throwing It Away. Giuseppe Tucci and Indian Logic

The aim of Lorenzo Pizzichemi's talk is to trace an overview of Tucci's scholarly interest in Indian Logic, especially in the Buddhist School of Logic and Epistemology ('pramāṇa'). After retracing Tucci's first steps and further leaps in the study of pramāṇa, Lorenzo will critically examine a few points that may particularly catch the attention of Philosophers and Logicians in Tucci's treatment of Buddhist Logic in his *Storia della filosofia indiana* (1957). In doing so, Lorenzo will briefly underline the importance of Western Medieval Logic in Tucci's logic-philosophical 'training', and the instrumental use of Logic in the Buddhist path of salvation. The talk will end with a little 'surprise': Contrary to common belief, Tucci was not the first one to point out the epistemological relevance of Indian Logic in Italy — Who else did it before him?

Dr. Nicola Bajetta (University of Hamburg)

First Steps on the Ladder: Preliminary Remarks on Vidyākaraśānti's Tarkasopāna ('A Ladder to Logic')

As a complement to Lorenzo Pizzichemi's talk, so as to assess Giuseppe Tucci's more strictly philological contributions, Nicola Bajetta will follow with a general overview of the *Tarkasopāna* ('A Ladder to Logic'), a short compendium of Buddhist logic and epistemology by Vidyākaraśānti (ca. 12th–13th cent.). Published in 1956 in *Minor Buddhist Texts* (Part I), Giuseppe Tucci's editio princeps of the *Tarkasopāna* was done on the basis of a single Sanskrit manuscript that is now lost. Building on Tucci's pioneering work, the talk will aim at shedding further light on the textual composition of Vidyākaraśānti's compendium and its indebtedness to earlier magna opera of the Buddhist pramāṇa tradition.

Prof. Klaus-Dieter Mathes (University of Vienna)

In the Footsteps of Giuseppe Tucci through the Himalayan Malla Kingdom in Western Nepal

One of the most significant discoveries of the great Italian adventurer and scholar Giuseppe Tucci was the ancient Himalayan Malla kingdom, whose capital, Semjā, was located a few miles north-west of present-day Jumla. Having found and deciphered two famous mid-14th-century Dullu inscriptions set up by King Pṛthvīmalla halfway between Jumla and the Indian frontier, Prof. Tucci could establish the royal genealogies of Guge and Semjā, both of which had come under the control of Purang (Pu hrangs). These ground-breaking findings form the foundation for new research on the history of the lamas of Bicher village in Dolpo (a district east of Semjā), which had been a part of the Malla kingdom under Pṛthvīmalla.

Klaus-Dieter Mathes will demonstrate how Tucci's analysis of one of the Dullu inscription lays the foundation for critically evaluating the Tibetan genealogies he discovered (and preserved on microfilm) following expeditions to Dolpo for the Nepal-German Manuscript Preservation Project in the 1990s. Of particular interest are a document (bem chag) from Bicher and an "account" (mol gtam) by the Dolpo lama Blo gros dbang phyug (mid 16th cent.). Both of these texts list the Semjā kings of the Dullu inscription up to Puṇyamalla (born between 1259 and 1267). After Puṇyamalla, the bem chag continues with the lamas of Bicher village, who are thus invested with the necessary authority to levy taxes. A startling detail of these tax lists is that an ox had to be slaughtered for the Bicher lamas in a place called Dkar ma'i rong, which is only three days away from Semjā. This finding suggests that the influence of Hinduism (which strictly prohibits the killing of cows and oxen) must have been marginal during Puṇyamalla's reign, and it confirms Tucci's observation of a strong Buddhist (i.e., non-Hindu) presence in the Malla kingdom.