

Bryan D. Lowe

Department of Religious Studies
Vanderbilt University
2301 Vanderbilt Place, VU Box #351585
Nashville, TN 37235-1585
bryan.lowe@vanderbilt.edu

EMPLOYMENT

Assistant Professor (tenure track), Vanderbilt University, Department of Religious Studies, Asian Studies Program, Graduate Department of Religion, August 2013–present

Mellon Assistant Professor, Vanderbilt University, Department of Religious Studies, Asian Studies Program, June 2012–August 2013

EDUCATION

- Ph.D. Princeton University, Department of Religion, 2012
Dissertation: “Rewriting Nara Buddhism: Sutra Transcription in Early Japan”
Primary advisor: Jacqueline I. Stone; Readers: Stephen F. Teiser and Martin C. Collcutt
- M.A. Princeton University, Department of Religion, 2009
- B.A. Middlebury College, Religion (Honors) and Japanese (High Honors), *Magna Cum Laude*, 2003

PUBLICATIONS: MONOGRAPH

Ritualized Writing: Buddhist Practice and Scriptural Cultures in Ancient Japan. Honolulu: Kuroda Institute Studies in East Asian Buddhism (University of Hawai'i Press), 2017.
Reviews: *Reading Religion* (<http://readingreligion.org/books/ritualized-writing>), *Religious Studies Review* 44/1 (2018): 120, *Japanese Journal of Religious Studies* 45/1(2018): 209–211, *The Journal of Japanese Studies* 44/2 (2018): 409–413

PUBLICATIONS: ARTICLES AND BOOK CHAPTERS

- “Nettowāku to shite no Tōdaiji [Tōdaiji as a Network].” In *Za Gureito Budda Shinpojiumu (GBS) ronshū 14 gō* [Papers from the The Great Buddha Symposium, no. 14], 87–104. Kyoto: Hōzōkan, 2017.
- “Bukkyō shinkō men kara mita gogatsu tsuitachi kyō gammon no saikō [A Reconsideration of the 5/1 Canon’s Dedicatory Prayer from the Perspective of Buddhist Devotional Practices].” In *Jōdai shakyō shikigo chūshaku* [Annotated Colophons of Ancient Sutra Manuscripts], ed. Endō Keita. 554–576. Tokyo: Bensei shuppan, 2016.
- “Chūgoku Tōdai to Nihon kodai ni okeru shakyō to 'shōjōkan' [Purity and Sutra Copying in Tang China and Early Japan].” In *Nara Heian jidai: chi no sōkan* [Correlation of Knowledge in the Nara and Heian Periods], ed. Nemoto Seiji et al, 91–112. Tokyo: Iwata shoin, 2015.
- “States of ‘State Buddhism’: History, Religion, and Politics in Late Nineteenth- and

- Twentieth-Century Scholarship.” *Japanese Religions* 39/1&2 (2014): 71–93.
- “Contingent and Contested: Preliminary Remarks on Buddhist Catalogs and Canons in Early Japan.” *Japanese Journal of Religious Studies* 41/2 (2014): 221–253.
- “Buddhist Manuscript Cultures in Premodern Japan.” *Religion Compass* 8/9 (2014): 287–301.
- “The Scripture on Saving and Protecting Body and Life: An Introduction and Translation.” *Journal of Chinese Buddhist Studies* 27 (2014): 1–34.
- “The Discipline of Writing: Scribes and Purity in Eighth-century Japan.” *Japanese Journal of Religious Studies* 39/2 (2012): 201–239.
- “Mori de maigo: Kaigai kara mita kodai shi [Lost in the Woods: A Foreign Perspective on Early Japanese History].” *Shidai Nihonshi* 15 (2012): 211–217.
- “Texts and Textures of Early Japanese Buddhism: Female Patrons, Lay Scribes, and Buddhist Scripture in Eighth-Century Japan.” *Princeton University Library Chronicle* 73:1 (Autumn 2011): 9–36.
- “Religion and Popular Culture in Japan.” In *World History Encyclopedia, Era 4: Expanding Regional Civilizations, 300–1000*. Edited by Wilfred J. Bisson. Santa Barbara, CA: ABC-CLIO, 2011.

PUBLICATIONS: BOOK REVIEWS

- “Review of Heather Blair. Real and Imagined. *Peak of Gold in Heian Japan*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Asia Center, 2015.” *Journal of Asian Humanities at Kyushu University* 2(2017): 137–141.
- “Review of Justin Thomas McDaniel and Lynn Ransom (eds.). *From Mulberry Leaves to Silk Scrolls: New Approaches to the Study of Asian Manuscript Traditions*. Philadelphia, PA: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2015.” *Material Religion* 12(2016): 522–523.

IN PROGRESS

- “Sōryō, zaika ni yoru kodai jūin no nettowāku” [Ancient Temple Networks of Monks and Laity].” To be published in *Kodai shi wo hiraku [Opening up Ancient History]*, edited by Yoshimura Takehiko, Yoshikawa Shinji, and Kawajiri Akio (expected publication 2018), Iwanami shoten.
- “Kokka no rekishi jojutsu to shūkyōsha tachi no rekishi [Historical Narratives of the State and a History of Religious Figures].” To be published in *Nihon shūkyōshi [History of Japanese Religions]*, edited by Yoshida Kazuhiko, Itō Satoshi, Uejima Susumu, and Satō Fumiko (expected publication 2018), Yoshikawa kōbunkan.
- “Kōmyō” Co-authored with Monica Bethe. To be published in *Brill’s Encyclopedia of Buddhism*, edited by Jonathan A. Silk et al. (expected publication 2018), Brill.
- “Roads, State, and Religion in Ancient Japan,” 15,000 word draft completed. To be submitted in fall of 2018.

CONFERENCE PAPERS

- “Localizing the Universal: Narrative and Performative Strategies in Ninth-Century Japanese Homilies.” Annual Meeting of the American Academy of Religion, November 20, 2017
- “Ritualized Writing: Buddhist Practice and Scriptural Cultures in Ancient Japan.” Society for the Study of Japanese Religions Panel on Meet the Authors: New Books on Japanese Religions at Annual Meeting of the American Academy of Religion, November 19, 2017
- “A Sermon on Verso, A Preacher in the Provinces: Re-centering the Study of Heian Buddhism.” 18th Congress of the International Association of Buddhist Studies, August 25, 2017
- “Digital Timelines in a Japanese Religions Course.” Annual Meeting of the Association for Asian Studies, March 19, 2017
- “From Dunhuang to Nara and Nara to Dunhuang: Manuscripts Sources and Shared East Asian Buddhist Cultures.” Annual Meeting of the American Academy of Religion, November 21, 2016
- “Rhetorical Strategies and Manuscript Cultures in Buddhist Sermons from Ninth-Century Japan.” AAS-in-Asia (Kyoto), June 26, 2016
- “Patron Function and Authorial Intent in Early Japanese Manuscript Cultures.” Annual Meeting of the Association for Asian Studies, April 1, 2016
- “Who’s the King? Ritualized Writing and Celestial Audience in Ancient Japanese Buddhism.” Annual Meeting of the American Academy of Religion, November 23, 2015
- “Kings Watching Kings: Ritual and Authority in Ancient Japan.” Annual Conference of South Central Modern Language Association, November 3, 2015
- “Composing the Cosmos in Ancient Japan: Post-Mortem Realms in Dedicatory Prayers.” The Asian Studies Conference Japan, June 20, 2015
- “Poeticized Cosmologies: Post-Mortem Realms and Dedicatory Prayers in Ancient Japan.” International Workshop on Traditional Sciences in Asia, June 19, 2015
- “Poetics of Prayer: The Intersection of Literature and Ritual in Early Japanese Buddhist Mortuary Practice.” Annual Meeting of the Association for Asian Studies, March 29, 2015
- “Composing Kingship and Cosmos: Prayer, Genre, and Ritual in Early Japan.” Annual Meeting of the American Academy of Religion, November 23, 2014
- “Instituting Transcription: Laborers, Administrators, and Scriptoria and the Emergence of a Textualized Buddhist Tradition in Japan.” 17th Congress of the International Association of Buddhist Studies, August 22, 2014
- “Restoration or Reform: Meiji Writings on Buddhism in the Nara Period (710–784).” The Asian Studies Conference Japan, June 21, 2014
- “Networks of Practice: Early Japanese Buddhism through the Lens of the Shōsōin Corpus.” Annual Meeting of the Association for Asian Studies, March 30, 2014
- “The Evils of Buddhist Politics: National History (*kokushi*) and the State Buddhism Model.” Annual Meeting of the American Academy of Religion, November 23, 2013
- “Contingent and Contested: The Buddhist Canon in Eighth-Century Japan.” Annual Meeting of the American Academy of Religion, November 20, 2012
- “Formations of Buddhism and State: Demons, Sovereigns, and Sutra Transcription in Eighth-Century Japan.” Annual Meeting of the Association for Asian Studies, March 18, 2012

- “Text as Practice: Patrons, Scribes, and Sutra Copying in Eighth-Century Japan.” Annual Meeting of the Association for Asian Studies, April 1, 2011
- “Empowering Texts: Calligraphy, Scribes, and Sutra Copying in Eighth-Century Japan.” Hierarchies: Graduate Symposium in East Asian Art at Princeton University, February 28, 2010
- “You Write What You Eat: Purity, Scribes, and Scripture Copying in Eighth-Century Japan.” Harvard East Asian Graduate Student Conference, February 28, 2009
- “Inscribing Scribes: Purity, Textuality, and Scripture Copying in Buddhist Narrative Literature.” Princeton Graduate Student Symposium in East Asian Studies, June 4, 2008
- “Dōji (?-744): In Search of a Contested Figure.” Princeton Graduate Student Symposium in East Asian Studies, May 18, 2007

INVITED LECTURES AND WORKSHOPS

- “Performing a Manuscript in the Ninth Century and Translating it in the Twenty-first: Methodological Reflections for Manuscript Studies” Varieties and Patterns of Manuscripts in Medieval Japan Conference, Centre for the Study of Manuscript Cultures (CSMC), University of Hamburg, Germany, August 22, 2018
- “Local Concerns: Death on the Road and in the Village in Ancient Japan.” Woodenfish Foundation Conference, Ultimate Concern: Death and Afterlife, Guangzhou, China, June 10, 2018
- “Copying Sutras in Premodern East Asia: Technical, Ritual, and Human Dimensions.” University of Michigan, April 6, 2018
- “Brambles on the Roadside: Religion, Roads, and State in Ancient Japanese Buddhism.” Donald Keene Center of Japanese Studies, Columbia University, March 8, 2018
- “Preaching to the Periphery: Buddhism in Provincial Villages in Ninth-Century Japan.” Harvard University Buddhist Studies Forum, February 12, 2018
- “On the Road and in the Village: Provincial Preaching and Ritual in Ninth-century Japan.” Workshop on Issues Regarding Religion and Society in Ancient and Medieval Japan at Princeton University, November 4, 2017
- “Grounding Heavens: Pure Land Thought and Practice in Liturgical Texts from Ancient Japan.” The Pure Land in the Nara Schools, McGill University, September 29, 2017
- “Inscribing Orality: Performance and Production of a Homiletic Manuscript from Ninth-century Japan.” Buddhist Book Cultures Symposium at University of Denver, April, 28, 2017
- “The Lotus Sutra and the Ritual of Sutra Copying in Premodern East Asia.” International Lotus Sutra Seminar (Chiba, Japan). June 30, 2016
- “The Nara Court Under Buddhism: The Religious Side of Political History in Ancient Japan.” 4th Stanley Weinstein Dissertation Prize Lecture at Yale University, March 10, 2016
- “Empty Temples, Nameless Monks, and Why They’re Important: A New Take on Early Heian Buddhism.” Reassessing Kodai: An Interdisciplinary Workshop on Approaches to the Cultural History of Early Japan and its Historiography at University of Michigan, February 12-13, 2016

- “Nettowāku to shite no Tōdaiji [Tōdaiji as a Network].” Invited presentation at Great Buddha Symposium at Tōdaiji (Nara, Japan), December 20, 2015
- “Ghastly Hauntings and Divine Justice: A New Approach to Ritual, Ethics and Kingship in Ancient Japanese Buddhism.” Invited lecture at Leiden University, May 11, 2015
- “Composing the Cosmos: Prayer, Poetics, and Cosmology in Ancient Japan.” Invited lecture for Center for Buddhist Studies at UCLA, March 6, 2015
- “Writing Societies: Colophons and Communities in Ancient Japanese Buddhism.” Workshop on Buddhist Manuscripts at University of Chicago, February 26–28, 2015
- “Haunted by Demons, Watched by Kings: Buddhism, Politics, and Sutra Transcription in Early Japan.” Invited lecture for East Asia Center at University of Virginia, February 28, 2014
- “Tilling the Karmic Garden: Sutra Transcription in Eighth-Century Japan.” Invited lecture for Kyoto Asian Studies Group, March 15, 2011
- “The Discipline of Writing: Scribes and Purity in Eighth-Century Japan.” Columbia Center for Japanese Religion’s Purity Workshop, February 19, 2010
- “Riting Scribes, Rewriting Nara Buddhism: Scribes and Sutra Copying in Eighth-Century Japan.” Invited Lecture for Duke University Triangle Japan Forum, December 2, 2009

RESPONDENT TO PAPERS AND PANELS

- Respondent to papers presented by Sugimoto Kazuki, “Copying Buddhist manuscripts in ancient Japan: the actual practice evident in the Shosoin Documents and Shōgozō” and Nathalie Monnet, “Towards a Reassessment of the Contents of Dunhuang Cave 17: Research on the Derivative Aspects of the Dunhuang Manuscripts.” January 21, 2017
- Respondent to papers presented by Akao Eikei, “Two Outstanding Tang Manuscripts in the Kyoto National Museum’s Moriya Collection” and Ochiai Toshinori, “A Manuscript Fragment of Woncheuk’s Yogacara Commentary.” International Conference on Buddhist Manuscript Cultures, Princeton University, January 15-17, 2016
- Respondent to papers presented by Michael Como, “The Medicine Buddha and the Dragon King: Healing and Rainmaking in Ninth-Century Japan” and Samuel Morse, “The Healing Buddha as Kami: Shinto-Buddhist Syncretism in the Early Heian Period and the Unified Silla-Period Standing Buddha at Watasumi Shrine, Tsushima.” Workshop sponsored by Columbia University’s Center for Buddhism and East Asian Religions, “The Cult of the Healing Buddha in East Asia,” Donghwasa Temple, South Korea, May 29–31, 2013
- Respondent, Paper presented by Satō Fumiko, “Kokka Bukkyō ron no seisei katei kara mita kokushi gaku to Bukkyōshigaku ni tsuite no gakumonshiteki kōsatsu [A disciplinary history style reconsideration of the formation of the state Buddhism model from the perspective of national history and Buddhist studies.” Research Group on Buddhism and Modernity, Kyoto University, May 25, 2013

WORKSHOPS AND PANELS ORGANIZED

- Roundtable organizer: “Digital Pedagogy for the Analog Past: Technological Tools and Methods for Teaching Premodern Japanese Materials.” Annual Meeting of the Association for

Asian Studies, March 19, 2017

Panel organizer: "Between Performance and the Page: Buddhist Preaching in East Asia."
AAS-in-Asia (Kyoto), June 26, 2016

Workshop co-organizer: "Networks and Religious Difference in Asian Buddhist Traditions."
Vanderbilt University, April 3-4, 2015

Panel organizer and chair: "The Creative Power of Death: Tradition and Innovation in Early
Japanese Mourning Practices." Annual Meeting of the Association for Asian Studies,
March 29, 2015

Panel organizer and chair: "Approaching Ancient Japan: New Methods and Sources for an
Interdisciplinary Study of the Nara Period (710-784)." Annual Meeting of the
Association for Asian Studies, March 30, 2014

Panel organizer: "Committed Scholars: Buddhist Studies and Politics in Early Twentieth-Century
Japan." Annual Meeting of the American Academy of Religion, November 23, 2013

Workshop co-organizer: "Religious Negotiations at the Boundaries." Vanderbilt University,
February 22-23, 2012

Film screening and panel discussion organizer: "Buddhism after the Tsunami: The Souls of Zen
3/11 Japan Special." Vanderbilt University, March 11, 2013

Workshop co-organizer for "Japan's Oldest Archive: A Workshop on the Shōsōin." Princeton
University, March 24-25, 2012

Panel organizer: "Transcription and Transformation: Buddhist Scribal and Manuscript Cultures in
Japan, Tibet, and Thailand." Annual Meeting of the Association for Asian Studies, April
1, 2011

Workshop co-organizer: "Graduate Student Symposium in East Asian Studies." Princeton
University, June 4-5, 2008

TEACHING EXPERIENCE

Vanderbilt University

Approaches to the Academic Study of Religion (formerly Senior Seminar in Religious
Studies): Fall 2012, 2013, 2014, 2015, and 2018

Buddhist Literature From Buddha to the Beats (First Year Writing Seminar): Fall 2015
2017, and 2018

Japanese Mythology: Fall 2014 and 2017

Religions of Japan: Fall 2012, Spring 2013, 2014, 2015, 2016, and 2018

Zen Buddhism: Spring 2014, 2015, 2016, and 2018

Senior Thesis advisor (one thesis 2013); Senior thesis committee (two theses 2013, one
thesis 2014, one thesis 2018)

Masters of Theological Studies reader for Alexandra Felber, "Genderless Sexuality and
No-Self: The Misinterpretation and Reclamation of the Transgressive Dakini
in American Tibetan Buddhist Communities," 2018

Dissertation Committee for Ryan Brand, "Bear Traps: (Un)doing Human-Animal

Entanglements in the Study of Religion” (expected completion, May 2019)

Kyūshū University

Topics in Text and Material Culture II: Buddhist Manuscript Cultures and Digital Resources. Graduate Student Summer Seminar, July 2016

Princeton University

Performance and Practice in Kyoto: Summer 2011 (course in Kyoto)
Assistant in Instruction (Main Instructor: Professor Thomas B. Hare)

Chinese Religions: Spring 2009
Assistant in Instruction (Main Instructor: Professor Stephen F. Teiser)

The Buddhist World of Thought and Practice: Fall 2008
Assistant in Instruction (Main Instructor: Professor Jacqueline I. Stone)

AWARDS/FELLOWSHIPS

Japan Foundation Research (Short-term) Fellowship, Summer 2017

Research Scholar Grant—Semester (Vanderbilt University), Spring 2017

National Endowment for the Humanities, Summer Stipend, 2016

Stanley Weinstein Dissertation Prize, Council on East Asia Studies, Yale University (biennial, 2012–2014 competition period)

Research Scholar Grant—Summer Stipend (Vanderbilt University), Summer 2015

Junior Faculty Teaching Fellow, Center for Teaching (Vanderbilt University), 2013–2014

Grant for Research on Buddhist Texts Using Old Japanese Manuscripts (*Nihon koshakyō wo riyō shita Butten kenkyū he no josei* 日本古写経を利用した仏典研究への助成), International College for Postgraduate Buddhist Studies (Tokyo), 2013–2014

Graduate Research Fellow at the Center for the Study of Religion (Princeton University), 2011–2012

Fullbright (IIE) Grant for graduate research in Japan, 2010–2011

Japan Foundation Grant for graduate research in Japan, 2010 (declined)

Society for the Promotion of Buddhism (BDK) Fellowship for graduate research in Japan, 2010 (declined)

Friends of the Princeton University Library Prize for Outstanding Scholarship by a Graduate Student, 2010

Department of Religion Teaching Award for Excellence in Undergraduate Teaching, 2009–2010

Princeton University Graduate Fellowship, 2006–2012

Princeton University East Asian Studies Prize, 2006–2008

East Asian Studies Program, Princeton University, Summer Fellowship, 2006–2009

Princeton Institute for International and Regional Studies, Summer Fellowship, 2007–2009

Department of Religion, Princeton University, Summer Fellowship, 2006–2007

OUTSIDE SEMINARS AND RESEARCH AFFILIATIONS

Otani University, Kyoto, Japan, 2010–2011
Research Fellow on Fulbright IIE grant

Middlebury College Chinese School, Middlebury, VT, 2007
Intensive nine-week program in modern Mandarin

Nanzan University Center for Japanese Studies, Nagoya, Japan, 2001
Semester abroad program focusing on Japanese language

LANGUAGES

Reading: Japanese (modern, classical, and kambun [Sino-Japanese]), Chinese (classical and modern mandarin), French

Speaking: Japanese (fluent), Mandarin (basic proficiency)

RELEVANT NON-ACADEMIC WORK EXPERIENCE

Coordinator for International Relations on the JET Program, Nagano, Japan, 2003–2005

PROFESSIONAL AND UNIVERSITY SERVICE

Referee: *Asian Perspectives: The Journal of Archaeology for Asia and the Pacific*, Brill, *Journal of Asian Humanities at Kyūshū University*, *The Medieval Globe*, *Monumenta Nipponica*, Social Science Research Council (International Dissertation Research Fellowship, 2016–2018), Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada

Steering Committee, Buddhism Section, American Academy of Religion, 2016–2019

Steering Committee, Japanese Religions Group, American Academy of Religion, 2015–2020

Area director for Critical Studies in Asian, Islamic, and Jewish Traditions in the Graduate Department of Religion, 2017–present

Learning Outcomes Assessment Program Committee, Department of Religious Studies, Vanderbilt University 2018

Fulbright Interviewer, Vanderbilt University, 2015 and 2017

Strategic Planning Committee: Asian Studies Program, Vanderbilt University, 2014–2015

Study Abroad Review Committee: Asian Studies Program, Vanderbilt University, 2013–2015

Curriculum Review Committee: Department of Religious Studies, Vanderbilt University 2013–2014

Site Editor and Contributor for Guide to Shōsōin Research, <https://my.vanderbilt.edu/shosoin/>

Advisory Board, H-Shukyo, 2012-2016

Overlook Seminar Co-coordinator, Vanderbilt University, 2012-2013

Departmental Faculty Library Representative, Vanderbilt University, 2012-2013

Religion Department Graduate Student Committee, Princeton University, 2009

Graduate Student Representative to Faculty Search Committee in Religion, Princeton University,
2007-2008

PROFESSIONAL MEMBERSHIPS

American Academy of Religion

Association for Asian Studies

International Association of Buddhist Studies

Society for the Study of Japanese Religions

Shōsōin Monjo Kenkyūkai