

Jonathan C. Gold

Professor, Department of Religion
Director, Center for Culture, Society and Religion
Princeton University
Princeton, NJ 08544
jcgold@princeton.edu
[Academia.edu](https://www.jonathangold.com)

Education

Ph.D. The University of Chicago, 2003, Philosophy of Religions.

Exams in Buddhism; Hinduism; Indian Buddhist philosophy; theories and methods in the history of religions; modern and twentieth-century philosophy of religion.

Dissertation: "Intellectual Gatekeeper: Sakya Paṇḍita Envisions the Ideal Scholar."

Committee: Matthew T. Kapstein (advisor), Paul J. Griffiths and Sheldon Pollock

M.A. The University of Chicago, 1996, Divinity.

B.A. Amherst College, 1991, Religion, *magna cum laude*.

Books

Co-edited with Douglas S. Duckworth, *Readings of Śāntideva's Guide to Bodhisattva Practice (Bodhicaryāvatāra)* (Columbia University Press, 2019).

Paving the Great Way: Vasubandhu's Unifying Buddhist Philosophy (Columbia University Press, 2014).

The Dharma's Gatekeepers: Sakya Paṇḍita on Buddhist Scholarship in Tibet (State University of New York Press, 2007).

Refereed Articles

"Pyrrho's Buddha on *Duḥkha* and the Liberation from Views," *Journal of the American Academy of Religion*, published online February 10, 2024: <https://doi-org.ezproxy.princeton.edu/10.1093/jaarel/lfae001>.

"The Coherence of Buddhism: Relativism, Ethics and Psychology," *Journal of Religious Ethics*, published online June 15, 2023: <http://doi.org/10.1111/jore.12433>.

"Vasubandhu: Mainstream and Mahāyāna," in *The Routledge Guide to Indian Buddhist Philosophy*, edited by William Edelglass, Pierre-Julien Harter, and Sara McClintock (Routledge, 2022).

"Wholesome Mind Ethics: A Buddhist Paradigm," *The Journal of Value Theory*, Published online August 4, 2021.
(<https://link.springer.com/content/pdf/10.1007/s10790-021-09845-7.pdf>)

"More Things in Heaven and Earth: The Path to *Nirvana*, Naturalized," in *Naturalism, Human Flourishing, and Asian Philosophy: Owen Flanagan and Beyond*, edited by Bongrae Seok (Routledge, 2019).

- “What’s Not in the Texts? Vasubandhu on Attainments (*adhigama*),” in *Reasons and Lives in Buddhist Traditions: Studies in Honor of Matthew Kapstein*, edited by Dan Arnold, Cécile Ducher, and Pierre-Julien Harter (Wisdom Publications, 2019).
- “Freedom through Cumulative Moral Cultivation: Heroic Willpower (*vīrya*),” *Journal of Buddhist Ethics* Vol 25, October 2018.
(<http://blogs.dickinson.edu/buddhistethics/2018/10/18/heroic-willpower-virya/>)
- “Vasubandhu on the Conditioning Factors and the Buddha’s Use of Language,” in Jonardon Ganeri, ed., *Oxford Handbook of Indian Philosophy* (Oxford University Press, 2016 online, 2017 print).
- “Vasubandhu: Constructing a Buddhist Mainstream,” in John Powers, ed., *The Buddhist World* (Routledge, 2015), pp. 512-525.
- “Without Karma and Nirvāṇa, Buddhism is Nihilism: The Yogācāra Contribution to the Doctrine of Emptiness,” in Jay Garfield & Jan Westerhoff, eds., *Madhyamaka and Yogācāra: Allies or Rivals?* (Oxford University Press, 2015), pp. 213-241.
- “Sakya Paṇḍita’s Anti-realism as a Return to the Mainstream,” *Philosophy East and West* 64.2, April 2014, pp. 360-374.
- “Does the Buddha Have a Theory of Mind? Human Distinctiveness and Animal Cognition in Buddhism,” in: *Routledge Companion to Religion and Science*, James Haag, Gregory Peterson, & Michael Spezio, eds. (Routledge, 2012), pp. 520-528.
- “Yogācāra Strategies against Realism: Appearances (*ākṛti*) and Metaphors (*upacāra*),” *Blackwell Religion Compass*, 1.1 (January 2007), pp. 131-147.
- “No Outside, No Inside: Duality, Reality and Vasubandhu’s Illusory Elephant,” *Asian Philosophy* 16.1 (March 2006), pp. 1-38.
- “Sa-skya Paṇḍita’s Buddhist Argument for Linguistic Study,” *Journal of Indian Philosophy* 33/2 (April 2005), pp. 151-184.
- “Guardian of the Translated Dharma: Sakya Pandita on the Role of the Tibetan Scholar,” in: Lynne Long, ed., *Translation and Religion: Holy Untranslatable?* (Clevendon, UK: Multilingual Matters, 2005).

Refereed Reference Work Contributions

- “Sautrāntika,” in *The Encyclopedia of Philosophy of Religion*, Stewart Goetz & Charles Taliaferro, eds. Wiley-Blackwell, 2021.
- “Sakya Paṇḍita,” in *Wiley/Blackwell Encyclopedia of Philosophy of Religion*, Stewart Goetz & Charles Taliaferro, eds. Wiley-Blackwell, 2021.
- “Sakya Paṇḍita [sa skya paṇ ḍi ta],” *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, Edward N. Zalta, ed., <https://plato.stanford.edu/entries/sakya-pandita/>, Dec. 2017.
- “Sakya,” *Oxford Bibliographies Online*, Oxford University Press (Fall 2012, <http://www.oxfordbibliographies.com/obo/page/buddhism>, revised 2015).
- “Vasubandhu,” *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, Edward N. Zalta, ed., <http://plato.stanford.edu/vasubandhu/>, April 2011, revised 2015.

Public-Facing Scholarship

- “[Commentary: Is Advertising a Problem for Buddhism?](#)” *Lion’s Roar*, September 10, 2023.
- “[Buddhism Can Handle the Simulation and the Singularity](#),” *Tricycle*, July 30, 2023.
- Guest on “The Minefield” podcast, “[Purification and the Moral Life: Transforming Desire](#),” April 7, 2022.
- “[Don’t Hand Power to Dangerous People \(even when they really want it\)—a modest Buddhist proposal](#),” ABC Australia’s “Religion & Ethics” page, March 8, 2022.
- “[What Omicron teaches us about karma](#),” ABC Australia’s “Religion & Ethics” page, Dec. 20, 2021.
- “[Trump’s karma, and ours](#),” ABC Australia’s “Religion & Ethics” page, Oct. 12, 2020.
- “[Jesus, Buddha and the Search for Meaning](#),” co-presented with Elaine Pagels, Aspen Ideas Festival, July 2019.
- “[Was it Kavanaugh’s Guilty Conscience, or His Karma?](#)” *Sightings*, Oct. 25, 2018.
- Interview with Robert Wright on “The Wright Show”, meaningoflife.tv:
<http://meaningoflife.tv/videos/36591>
- Interview with Ronney Mourad on “Ultimate Concerns” Podcast:
<http://ultimateconcerns.org/vasubandhu-and-virtual-reality>

Book Reviews

Buddhist Studies Review

A Critique of Western Buddhism: Ruins of the Buddhist Real, by Glen Wallis.
(March 2023)

Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies

Indian Buddhist Philosophy, by Amber Carpenter (February 2015)

Philosophy East and West

“Feature Review of Dan Arnold, *Brains, Buddhas, and Believing*” and “Reply to Dan Arnold,” *Philosophy East and West* 64.4, October 2014, pp. 1048-57 & 1067-68.

Journal of Buddhist Philosophy (SUNY Press)

Distinguishing the Views & Philosophies: Illuminating Emptiness in a Twentieth-Century Tibetan Buddhist Classic, by Bötrül, trans. by Douglas Duckworth. (2015)

Sophia: International Journal of Philosophy and Traditions (Springer)

A Yogācāra Buddhist Theory of Metaphor, by Roy Tzohar. (2019).
<https://doi.org/10.1007/s11841-019-0716-7>.

Moonshadows: Conventional Truth in Buddhist Philosophy, by The Cowherds
(June 2013).

History of Religions (The University of Chicago)

Buddhist Nuns, Monks and Other Worldly Matters, by Gregory Schopen (June 2017)

- Socially Engaged Buddhism*, by Sallie King (August 2011) *International Journal of Hindu Studies* (Springer)
- “The Infinite, Within Limits,” a review of *Infinite Paths to Infinite Reality: Sri Ramakrishna and Cross-Cultural Philosophy of Religion*, by Ayon Maharaj. (2021)
- Against a Hindu God: Buddhist Philosophy of Religion in India*, by Parimal G. Patil (Aug 2011)
- Buddhist Goddesses of India*, by Miranda Shaw (Apr 2008)
Religious Studies Review (Wiley-Blackwell)
- Twelve Examples of Illusion*, by Jan Westerhoff (June 2015)
- Resurrecting Candrakīrti: Disputes in the Tibetan Creation of Prāsaṅgika*, by Kevin A. Vose (December 2010)
- The Culture of the Book in Tibet*, by Kurtis R. Schaeffer. (December 2010)
- The Essence of Other-Emptiness*, by Tāranātha, translated by Jeffrey Hopkins (March 2008)
- Mountain Doctrine, Tibet’s Fundamental Treatise on Other-Emptiness and the Buddha Matrix*, translated by Jeffrey Hopkins (March 2008)
- Middle Beyond Extremes: Maitreya’s Madhyāntavibhāga with commentaries by Khenpo Shenga and Ju Mipham*, translated by Dharmacakra Translation Committee (March 2008)
- H-Buddhism* (H-Net Humanities & Social Sciences Online)
- A Mirror is For Reflection: Understanding Buddhist Ethics*, edited by Jake Davis. (January 2019)
- Ocean of Reasoning: A Great Commentary on Nāgārjuna’s Mūlamadhyamakakārikā*, by Tsong Khapa, translated by Ngawang Samten & Jay Garfield (Sept 2007)
- The Journal of Religion* (The University of Chicago) *Kiss of the Yoginī*, by David Gordon White (Apr 2004)
- Hindu God, Christian God*, by Francis X. Clooney (Jan 2004)

Reprints, etc.

- “[Wholesome Mind Ethics: a Buddhist paradigm for the cultivation of the moral life](#),” ABC Australia’s “Religion & Ethics” page, April 6, 2022. Partial reprint from *Journal of Value Inquiry*, August 2021.
- “Sakya Paṇḍita’s *Gateway to Learning*,” in Kurtis R. Schaeffer, Matthew T. Kapstein, & Gray Tuttle, eds., *Sources of Tibetan Tradition* (Columbia University Press, 2013), pp. 390-396.
- “Theravāda Buddhism,” “Life of the Buddha,” “Stories of the Buddha,” “Mahāyāna Buddhism,” “Early Buddhist Missionary Activity,” “Sūtra Literature and Early Indian Philosophy,” “Early Buddhist Pilgrimages,” “Buddhist Rejection of Violence,” and “Development of Buddhist Monasteries,” in Kevin M McGeogh & William E. Mierse, eds., *World History Encyclopedia, Era 3: Classical Traditions, 1000 BCE-300 CE* (ABC-CLIO, 2010).

“Compassion in Buddhism” and “Teachers in Buddhism,” in Yudit Greenberg, ed., *The Encyclopedia of Love in World Religions* (November 2007, ABC-CLIO).

Presentations (selected)

- “Nonviolence to Counter Attachment to Social Identity: A Buddhist Idea,” Rutgers University Conference on “Philosophies of Nonviolence,” February 16, 2024.
- “Buddhist Psychology and the Moral Lessons of Relativism,” EuARE Annual Meeting, Bologna, June 2022.
- “Pyrrho’s Buddhist Witness to *Duhkha* and the Liberation from Views,” Harvard University, May 2022.
- “The Karmic Ethics of Identity, With or Without Rebirth,” Society of Fellows, Princeton University, April 2021.
- “Agents of Unending Change: A Buddhist Approach to Identity,” Cornell University Society for Buddhist Studies, November 2020.
- “[What Use is Buddhist Philosophy? Constructing the Path for Academia](#),” Numata Symposium on Buddhist Philosophy: The State of the Field, University of California, Berkeley, September 2019.
- “Transforming our Social Karma: Buddhist Concepts and the Role of Academia,” Dharma Drum Vancouver Center, September 2019.
- “Buddhist Moral Models for a Post-Truth Era,” Tel Aviv University, June 2019.
- “Karma and Culture: A Buddhist Ethics of Cumulative Causality,” Temple University, May 2019.
- “Vasubandhu’s *Thirty Verses* on Non-duality and Figurative Predication,” AAR Annual Meeting, November 2017.
- “Buddhist Emptiness as a Pragmatic Tool for Reasoning about Consciousness,” Princeton Institute for Advanced Studies YHouse, October 2017.
- “Participatory Authorship and Communal Interpretation: The *Bodhicaryāvatāra* as a ‘World Classic,’” Princeton East Asian Studies Colloquium, March 2017.
- “Vasubandhu’s Relativism about the Buddha’s Causal Concepts,” Harvard Buddhist Studies Forum, January 2016.
- “Yogācāra Metaphysics as a Model for the Interpretation of Scripture,” International Association of Buddhist Studies Conference, Vienna, August 2014.
- “Causality and the Emptiness of Doctrines: Vasubandhu’s Unifying Buddhist Vision,” University of Chicago Divinity School, February 2013.
- “Accepting the Conditions: Some Ethical Implications of Vasubandhu’s Buddhist Causal Theory,” Columbia University Seminar on Comparative Philosophy, February 2013.
- “On the Reality of the Mind in Yogācāra: A Constructive Debate on Vasubandhu’s *Trisvabhāvanirdeśa*,” with Jay Garfield, American Academy of Religion Annual Meeting, November 2011.
- “Vasubandhu’s Ultimate: How Scriptural Hermeneutics Lays the Foundation for a Yogācāra Mainstream,” Berkeley Buddhist Studies Colloquium, November 2011.
- “Sakya Paṇḍita’s Anti-realism as a Return to the Mainstream,” International Association of Buddhist Studies Conference, Taipei, June 2011.

- “In Search of Philosophical Continuity in Vasubandhu: Causality, Scripture, and Language,” International Association of Buddhist Studies Conference, Taipei, 2011.
- “Sakya Paṇḍita and the Legacy of Indian Epistemology,” Rubin Scholars Seminar, Tibetan Buddhist Resource Center, March 2011.
- “Mining Vasubandhu’s Commentary on the *Madhyāntavibhāga* for Yogācāra Philosophical Motives,” American Academy of Religion Annual Meeting, November 2010.
- “Nonviolence and the Perfect Intention: A Response to Richard Sorabji and Jeff McMahan,” New Jersey City University Conference on Nonviolence, September 2010.
- “A Buddhist Counter to Ethical Nihilism,” Binghamton University Philosophy Department, SPEL Colloquium, March 2010.
- “Lessons to be Learned from Tibetan Translation Theory,” Princeton University Translation Lunch Lecture, February 2010.
- “Taking Up the Burden: Carrying Vasubandhu from the *Treasury* to the *Three Natures*,” American Academy of Religion Annual Meeting, November 2009.
- “Selfhood, Causality and Illusion in Vasubandhu,” American Philosophical Association, December 2008.
- “Illuminating the Ineffable: Yogācāra Metaphors and the Self-Referential Problem,” Emory University, November 2008.
- “An Early Yogācāra Critique of Subjectivity,” Fordham University, October 2008.
- “The Self That Appears: Causality and Identity in Yogacara Thought,” Columbia Society for Comparative Philosophy, Columbia University, March 2008.
- “Sakya Paṇḍita’s Religious Arguments for Literary Expertise,” Harvard Buddhist Studies Forum, Harvard University, December 2007.
- “Religious Politics and the Buddhist Monks of Burma,” Drew University Center on Religion, Culture & Conflict, October 2007.
- “The Sword of Wisdom: Scholarship in a Buddhist Worldview,” India Studies Lecture Series, Charles B. Wang Center, Stony Brook University, April 2007.
- “Practical, Buddhist Lessons on Philosophy and Truth,” Joint Session of Comparative Studies in Religion Section and Buddhist Philosophy Group, AAR Annual Meeting, November 2006.
- “Tantra: Storming the Gates of Buddhahood,” University of Vermont Holistic Health Center, April 2006.
- “Present Gods: Understanding Divinities in Indian Art,” Fleming Museum, The University of Vermont, March 2005.
- “Linguistic Communities, Semantic Relativity, and Other Buddhist Theories from 13th Century Tibet,” McGill University, January 2005.
- “Sakya Pandita’s Buddhicization of the rasas: Sanskrit Poetics for a Tibetan Elite,” AAR Buddhism Section, Annual Meeting November 2004.
- “Preserving the Conventional Dharma: A Tibetan Buddhist Philosophy of Translation,” Binghamton University (State University of New York), February 2003.

- “Interpreting Asian Hermeneutics: A Response to Valerie Stoker,” APA Annual Meeting December 2002.
- “Just How Much Sanskrit Do I Need? Sakya Pandita on Buddhism in Tibetan Translation,” AAR Buddhism Section, Annual Meeting November 2002.
- “Simplicity Naturalized: Distinguishing Religious from Scientific Uses of Epistemology,” AAR Philosophy of Religion Section, Annual Meeting November 2002.

Professional Experience

Assistant/Associate/Professor, Department of Religion, Princeton University (2008-)
Associated Faculty, Department of East Asian Studies, University Center for Human Values, & Program in Philosophy of Religion.

Courses: Religions of India; Tibetan Buddhism; Nonviolence Across Religious History; Buddhist Philosophy; Buddhism and Politics; Mind and Meditation; Jesus and Buddha (co-taught with Elaine Pagels); Classics and Controversies in South Asian Religions (Graduate); Buddhist Philosophy in India and Tibet (Graduate); Readings in Sanskrit: *Bhagavad Gīta* (Graduate); Tibetan Buddhist Lineages (Graduate).

Visiting Assistant Professor, Department of Religious Studies, Drew University (2006-2008)

Courses: Religions of India; Tibetan Buddhism; Introduction to Religion; Religions of China and Japan; Religious Scriptures of Asia: Compassion in Buddhism; First Year Seminar: Nonviolence in Religious Thought.

Lecturer, Department of Religion, University of Vermont (2004-2006)

Courses: Introduction to the Study of Religion: Asian Traditions; Tibet: Buddhism and Society; Buddhist Traditions; Hindu Traditions.

Teaching Competence

Buddhism and Hinduism (History and Philosophy); Asian Religions; Critical Approaches to the Study of Religion; Western Philosophy of Religions; Tibetan Language; Sanskrit Language.

Grants, Prizes and Fellowships

“Borobudur: A Joint Research Project for Faculty and Students,” *Humanities Council*, Princeton University, Spring 2019-Spring 2021. (*rescheduled due to COVID-19*)

“The *Buddhadhamma* as Sets, Functions and Variables,” *Center for Digital Humanities*, Princeton University, Spring 2019.

Behrman Faculty Fellowship in the Humanities, Princeton University, 2014-2016.

Julis Foundation University Preceptorship, Princeton University, 2011-2014.

Faculty Research Assistance Grant, Drew University, 2006-2008.

Research Grant, University of Vermont Department of Asian Studies, 2004-5 & 2005-6.

Susan Colver-Rosenberger Educational Prize, University of Chicago, 2004.

Henry Luce Dissertation Fellow, Chicago Forum on Scholarship in Theology and Religion, University of Chicago Divinity School, 2002-2003.

Research Grant, University of Chicago Committee on South Asian Studies, 1999-2000 and 2002-2003.

Dissertation Fellow, Martin Marty Center, University of Chicago Divinity School, 2001-2002.

Travel Grant, University of Chicago Committee on South Asian Studies, 2000.

Service

Director, Princeton University Center for Culture, Society and Religion (was Center for the Study of Religion), 2019-present.

Co-Chair, Columbia University Seminar on Comparative Philosophy, 2008-present.

Co-Chair, Princeton University Buddhist Studies Workshop, 2011-present.

Executive Committee Member, Program in South Asian Studies, Princeton University, 2008-present.

Referee, Oxford University Press, Columbia University Press, Austrian Science Fund (FWF), *Journal of the American Academy of Religion*, *Journal of Religious History*, *Philosophy East and West*, *Journal of Religion*, *Journal of Buddhist Philosophy*.

Faculty Fellow, Society of Fellows in the Liberal Arts, 2019- 2021.

Committee Member, Fulbright Campus Committee, Princeton University, 2013-2020.

Director of Graduate Studies, Princeton University Department of Religion, 2017-2019.

Director, Princeton University Program in South Asian Studies, 2015-2016; 2017-2019.

Steering Committee Member, AAR Buddhist Philosophy Group, 2012-2018.

Founder & Chair, Buddhist Ethics Reading Group, Princeton University, 2011-2014.

Committee Member, Review and Selection Committee, Davis Projects for Peace, Princeton University, 2011-2012.

Panel Convenor, “Readings of the *Bodhicaryāvatāra*,” International Association of Buddhist Studies meeting (Aug 2017); “Yogācāra: Modeling the Meaning of the Mahāyāna,” International Association of Buddhist Studies meeting (Aug 2014); “Searching for Vasubandhu,” International Association of Buddhist Studies Meeting (July 2011); “Buddhist Philosophy as a Comparative Enterprise: A Solution to Philosophy’s Problem of Truth,” American Academy of Religion Annual Meeting (Nov 2006); “Translators and Translation Strategies in Buddhist History,” American Academy of Religion Annual Meeting (Nov 2002).

Languages (reading)

Tibetan, Sanskrit, French, German.

Professional Affiliations

American Academy of Religion, International Association of Buddhist Studies, American Philosophical Association, Association for Nepal and Himalayan Studies.

References

Available Upon Request