



École Pratique
des Hautes Études

PSL

Buddhist Homiletics: Forays into a Neglected Tradition

lecture series by Prof. Péter-Dániel Szántó (ELTE, Budapest)

invited by Vincent Eltschinger and Judit Törzsök

This seminar series explores the largely overlooked tradition of Buddhist homiletics, focusing on the relationship between Late Antique Indian (monastic) Buddhism and the laity through the medium of preaching. Discussions will center on excerpts from three key texts:

- The *Suḥṛllekha* ("Letter to a Friend") and the *Ratnāvalī Rājaparīkathā* ("Jewel Garland, a Royal Sermon), traditionally attributed to Nāgārjuna. According to legend, both these texts were composed to instruct a king; their complete, original Sanskrit witnesses have only recently resurfaced.
- The **Saddharmaparīkathā* ("Sermons on the True Law"), an anonymous work that survives in a single manuscript and remains for the most part unedited.

In addition to examining these texts through the lens of detailed textual criticism, the seminar will investigate the rhetorical strategies employed by Buddhist preachers and consider their potential impact on lay audiences.

Seminar titles, dates and venues:

1. Buddhism for Beginners: Edifying Literature for the Laity in the Early First Millennium and Beyond. **28th April, 2025, 13h. EPHE Sorbonne, salle Gaston Paris.**
2. The Epistolary Literature Attributed to Nāgārjuna: Two Letters to Kings and Their Recently Recovered Sanskrit Witnesses. **30th April, 2025, 17h. EPHE 54 Blvd Raspail, salle 26.**
3. Preaching to the Laity: The **Saddharmaparīkathā* as a Guidebook for Buddhist Homileticians. **19th May, 2025, 13h. EPHE Sorbonne, salle Gaston Paris.**
4. Buddhist Homiletics Against Vices: Sermons against the Vices of Gambling, Drinking, and Fornication. **22nd May, 2025, 14h. EPHE 54 Blvd Raspail, salle 17.**

