

The Heidelberg Colloquies in East Asian Art History and Buddhist Stone Inscriptions in North China

Lothar Ledderose

2005 Balzan Prize for the History of the Art of Asia

Balzan GPC Adviser: Dmitry O. Shvidkovsky

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Period: 2006-2011 (Heidelberg Colloquies); 2006-2015 (Buddhist Stone Inscriptions)

Websites: http://iko.uni-hd.de/archive/conferences_en.html (Heidelberg Colloquies); <http://www.museenkoeln.de/home/pages/785.aspx?s=785&jahr=2009> (Buddhist Stone Inscriptions)

Lothar Ledderose is Senior Professor of the History of East Asian Art at Ruprecht-Karls-Universität, Heidelberg. He financed two projects with the second half of his Balzan Prize.

Heidelberg Colloquies

One third of the second part of Ledderose's prize went towards the funding of colloquies held at The Institute of East Asian Art History at Heidelberg University (Institut für Kunstgeschichte Ostasiens an der Universität Heidelberg). About thirty researchers who were writing their theses in the field of East Asian Art gave papers. The purpose was to give them a forum where they could present their work in progress, to offer them an opportunity to learn about each other's topics and methods, and to establish international standards in the field. Applications were solicited from Europe, America and East Asia. Based on written thesis proposals, the selection was made by a committee of three professors from more than one country. In addition, one senior specialist was invited to each colloquy to give a lecture. Selected theses have been published. One young researcher took charge of the preparatory work for the colloquies, which

were entitled the *Heidelberg Colloquies on East Asian Art History*. The Heidelberg International Colloquies were held between September 2006 and July 2011.

Buddhist Stone Inscriptions

Another research project was carried out in collaboration with the Heidelberg Academy of Sciences and Humanities (Heidelberger Akademie der Wissenschaften – HAW). This institution supports long term research on Buddhist inscriptions engraved in stone in China. The research project's principal aim was to fully document these inscriptions. The Ledderose-Balzan research project explored methods of presenting the inscriptions to the scholarly community, and how to make them known and intelligible to a wider audience, which involved developing new methods of digitizing the inscriptions and presenting them visually. One result of this research project was the exhibition *Herz der Erleuchtung. Buddhistische Kunst in China 550-600 / The Heart of Enlightenment. Buddhist Art in China 550-600* organized for the centenary of the Museum für Ostasiatische Kunst, Köln (Germany). Remaining funds were used to present research results digitally.

In 2014, *Buddhist Stone Sutras in China*, with Lothar Ledderose editing the first volume on the Sichuan Province, was awarded the Toshihide Numata Book Prize for the worldwide most outstanding book in the field of Buddhist studies. Balzan funds also enabled Professor Ledderose and his collaborators Dr. Claudia Wenzel, Martin Bemann, MA, and Manuel Sassmann, MA from Heidelberg to travel to the awards ceremony in October of 2015 at the University of Berkeley, where they gave a report on the team's work, joined by colloquy participant Professor Dame Jessica Rawson of Oxford University. Balzan funds also made publication of researcher Paul Copp's book on Buddhist incantations possible.

Exhibition

Herz der Erleuchtung. Buddhistische Kunst in China 550-600 / The Heart of Enlightenment. Buddhist Art in China 550-600. Museum für Ostasiatische Kunst, Köln, 2009.

Publications

Copp, Paul. *The Body Incantatory. Spells and the Ritual Imagination in Medieval Chinese Buddhism*. New York: Columbia University Press, 2014.

Herz der Erleuchtung. Buddhistische Kunst in China 550-600 / The Heart of Enlightenment. Buddhist Art in China 550-600, edited by the Museum für Ostasiatische Kunst, Köln and the research project Buddhist Stone Inscriptions in China of the Heidelberger Akademie der Wissenschaften. Köln: Peipers-Druck Zentrum Köln West, 2009.

Hwang Yin. "The Age of Enlightenment: Global Perspectives on the History of East Asian Art. An interview with Lothar Ledderose and Adele Schlombs." *Orientations* (Nov./Dec. 2009).