

PhD Student/Post-Doctoral Fellow Positions (11-081) Faculty of Humanities

PhD Student/Post-Doctoral Fellow Positions in Buddhism and Social Justice: Doctrine, Ideology and Discrimination in Tension **Vacancy number: 11-081**

The Leiden University Institute for Area Studies (LIAS) of the Faculty of Humanities at Leiden University invites applications for two full-time positions (PhD student and/or Post-doctoral Fellow) in the NWO-funded project "Buddhism and Social Justice: Doctrine, Ideology and Discrimination in Tension," headed by Prof. dr. Jonathan Silk. Initial appointment will be from September 2011 or as soon as possible thereafter.

Since its foundation in 1575, Leiden University, with around 17,000 students and 4,000 staff, has built an internationally recognized record of excellence in teaching and research. The Faculty of Humanities consists of the Institutes for Area Studies, Creative & Performing Arts, Cultural Disciplines, History, Linguistics, Philosophy, and Religious Studies. It has about 4,500 students and 900 staff from around the world. The faculty offers about 30 BA and 45 MA programs. The Graduate School has an annual output of about 50 PhDs.

The Leiden University Institute for Area Studies (<http://www.hum.leiden.edu/lias/>), which comprises the Schools of Asian Studies and Middle Eastern Studies, is committed to the integration of disciplinary and regional-historical perspectives, and has as its aim the advancement of teaching and research of Area Studies at Leiden University and in the wider academic community. Area specializations in Asian Studies include Chinese, Japanese, Korean, South- & Southeast Asian, and Tibetan Studies.

Project description

Buddhism is widely perceived to be, and Buddhist sources themselves promote the tradition as, a philosophy of liberation. Yet Buddhist societies, both ancient and modern, not only evidence, but indeed seem to promote, social inequalities. The project 'Buddhism and Social Justice' explores the inner tensions in Buddhist cultures between inherited core values and social realities.

The project revolves around a core investigation of slavery and caste in India, with current collaborators also investigating slavery in Korea and monastic economy in Tibet, approached through text-historical, historical and a socio-anthropological methods. The synergy between subprojects lies in the question of how Buddhist ways of thinking and acting inform and structure historically Buddhist Asian societies, and how, correspondingly, Buddhist ideologies and dogmas were transformed in historical contexts. This study seeks therefore to uncover the links between the ancient and the modern and the theoretical and the real-world, thereby leading both to a deeper appreciation of how religious systems function in societies in general, and to a more nuanced appreciation of the dynamics of historically Buddhist societies in general, particularly with respect to questions of social justice.

For the available positions we seek scholars interested in investigating some aspect of Buddhism and Social Justice, broadly conceived. Because the starting point of the project is

Buddhism, rather than Social Justice per se, familiarity with the history, doctrine and relevant original languages of Buddhist traditions is essential.

Tasks for PhD candidates:

- Participation in local research meetings and PhD teaching;
- The writing of a PhD dissertation;
- Helping to organize a conference in the framework of the research project;
- Presenting papers at international conferences;
- Publishing research results in the form of (an) article(s).

Requirements

- A (Research) MA degree in Buddhist Studies or in a related field with a strong Buddhist Studies component; exceptionally qualified students with a BA are also encouraged to apply;
- Knowledge of the relevant language(s);
- Ability to work both independently and as part of a team;
- Excellent skills in English.

Post-Doc applicants should have a demonstrably excellent academic track record in Buddhist Studies, and hold a PhD in Buddhist Studies or a related field, or its equivalent. They should have an excellent command of English and be prepared to present their research results in English. In addition to research, post-doc fellows will teach a small number of courses on topics within their area of specialization, and assist in guiding the PhD students.

Conditions of employment

The position of Ph.D. student is temporary for maximally four years of full-time appointment, and with an initial nine-month probationary period. The position of the Post-doctoral fellow is temporary, max. three years with a full-time appointment, and with an initial nine-month probationary period.

The salary is determined in accordance with the current scales as set out in the collective labour agreement for the Dutch universities (CAO):

Ph.D. fellow: min. € 2.042,- max. € 2.612,- gross per month, with additional holiday and end-of-year bonuses.

Postdoctoral fellow: min. € 2.379, max. € 4.374, with additional holiday and end-of-year bonuses.

Candidates from outside the Netherlands may be eligible for a substantial tax break.

Information

For more information about the position please contact Prof. dr. J.A Silk, tel. +31-71-527-2510, email j.a.silk@hum.leidenuniv.nl. Please note that **applications** should not be sent

directly to Prof. Silk; see the address below.

Application

PhD candidates please send your application (in English), including:
a cover letter stating your motivation for this position,
a CV,
copies of your academic transcripts,
an English writing sample,
two letters of reference.

Post-doc candidates please send your application (in English), including:
a cover letter stating your motivation for this position,
a CV,
copies of your academic transcripts,
a copy of your PhD thesis and other relevant publications,
three letters of reference.

Review of applications will commence by 15 May 2011 and continue until the position is filled or this call is closed.

Please **send your application** electronically, indicating the vacancy number to: vacatureslias@hum.leidenuniv.nl

All application materials should be sent in pdf format.

If it is not possible for you to submit an electronic application, you may mail your materials, citing the vacancy number, to:

M. van Asperen
Leiden University
P&O FGW
PO Box 9515
2300 RA Leiden
The Netherlands

A telephone (or Skype) interview may be part of the selection procedure.