

## **Buddhist Institutions as Social Services Providers: What Implications for China's Welfare Regime?**

One of the most unexpected developments for the last three decades in the realm of social policy in China since the beginning of the reform and opening policy is the steady growth of Buddhist philanthropy as a network of foundations, merit societies and a variety of philanthropic associations providing a vast array of social services. Professor Laliberte's talk will present the policy context in which Buddhist institutions have been invited by local officials in China to assist them in the provision of disaster relief, support of students in impoverished parts of the country, help to the elderly, and participation in poverty alleviation. His talk will review, along with the legal and administrative frameworks that have shaped from the beginning Buddhist philanthropy, the changing political context that has allowed for an increasingly large array of possibilities. His talk will offer evidence from his fieldwork over the last ten years in diverse locations throughout China. Professor Laliberte will briefly sketch the early emergence of Buddhist philanthropy, and review the different contributions made by different kinds of organisations at the provincial, municipal, and temple levels. He will reflect on the key role of Taiwan-based Buddhist institutions involved in the delivery of social services and how they have contributed to social services in Mainland China. The talk will conclude with some reflections on the future of Buddhist philanthropy's contribution to China's current welfare regime, acknowledging the political and institutional obstacles that remain in place to limit the expansion of Buddhist philanthropy in the near future. This talk will reflect on what the Party expects from Buddhists for the implementation of its policies.