



SLAS Lectures

Univ. of
Lausanne

Department of South
Asian Studies

Prof. Em. Brian Bocking (Univ. College Cork) Tracking 'The Irish Buddhist' through 1900s Burma, Ceylon, India, Singapore, Siam - and Japan, Australia, Ireland and the USA...

A semi-educated working-class Irishman with the Burmese ordination name of U Dhammaloka appeared suddenly on the public stage in Rangoon in July 1900. For more than a dozen years, alongside numerous Asian friends, fellow activists, and supporters, he toured, preached, campaigned, published, opened schools and fostered networks promoting pan-Asian and mainly Buddhist resistance to European colonialism, symbolised in his speeches as "the Bible, the bottle and the Gatling gun" (missionary Christianity, alcohol and military force). Then history forgot him.

Piecing together Dhammaloka's exploits across at least three continents and a dozen countries has taken a team of three lead researchers in different countries ten years, culminating in the publication in 2020 of the co-authored book *The Irish Buddhist: the Forgotten Monk who Faced Down the British Empire*.^{*} As well as traditional archival and fieldwork research and the help of specialists in different fields, many of our discoveries relied on the expanding technologies of the digital humanities to recover more than a thousand otherwise irretrievable fragments of evidence. In this seminar I will reflect on the practical problems and possibilities of online collaborative research and writing and the opportunities this offers for overturning conventional histories, in South Asia and beyond, in the period around 1900.

^{*}Alicia Turner, Laurence Cox, Brian Bocking. New York: Oxford University Press

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4:15 - 6:00 pm

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