Coexisting with the exhibition, Treasures Rediscovered: Chinese Stone Sculptures from the Sackler Collections at Columbia University, to be held at the University of Virginia Art Museum, January 15–March 14, 2010, Cultural Crossings: China and Beyond in the Medieval Period combines an international conference with a workshop on digital projects to investigate exchanges between China and neighboring cultures during the medieval period (third–tenth centuries) from cross-cultural and interdisciplinary perspectives.

Since its establishment in the first century of the common era, the Silk Road was a channel for the transmission of ideas, technologies, and artistic forms, with far-reaching impact that stretched from the Pacific to the Atlantic. In Asia, the transmission of religious faiths along the Silk Road—most notably Buddhism—had a profound impact on the ideas, material culture, and languages of the region. During this period, Buddhism spread eastward from India via both land and maritime routes. By the end of the seventh century, the center of the Buddhist world had shifted to China, where Indian and Central Asian Buddhist monks gathered at the capitals of the Tang (618–907) dynasty. Diplomatic missions and pilgrim-monks from the kingdoms of Korea and Japan brought this religion and other aspects of Chinese civilization back to their own countries. The fruits of these exchanges were manifested in an increasingly uniform and international Buddhist idiom, along with other cultural elements that still remain to be explored in depth.

The Cultural Crossings conference intends to open new avenues for research into these complex and far-reaching exchanges by breaking down traditional national and disciplinary boundaries. By bringing together specialists of the period who are engaged in research in such diverse areas as Silk Road studies, history, literature, gender, art, and religion of the region—and putting them into productive dialogue with one another—we hope to identify areas of common interest that can foster new approaches. Understanding of transnational exchanges from such historical contexts, moreover, deepens our appreciation of the modern world from a global perspective.

Taking advantage of the gathering of scholars from a wide range of disciplines at the conference, the Institute for Advanced Technology in the Humanities (IATH) at the University of Virginia will also host a half-day workshop, March 13, to focus on collaborative scholarship that has the potential to enhance existing related digital projects in Asian art and humanities.

Contact information | culturalcrossings@email.virginia.edu
Conference organizer | Dorothy Wong, Chinese Art History
Co-organizers | Gustav Heldt, Japanese Literature, and Eric Ramirez-Weaver, Medieval Art History
Coordinator | Anna Kim, PhD candidate Italian Renaissance Art History
Additional administrative assistance | Graham Odell and Margaret Bierwirth, the East Asia Center, and student volunteers

Within the University of Virginia, funding for the conference and workshop has been provided by:
- Buckner W. Clay Endowment for the Humanities Grant
- East Asia Center
- Medieval Studies Program
- Page-Barbour Interdisciplinary Initiative Grant
- University of Virginia Art Museum
- Ellen Bayard Weedon Foundation Grant

With additional generous support from:
- Chiang Ching-kuo Foundation for International Scholarly Exchange, Taiwan Dharma Drum Buddhist College, Taipei
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Discussant: Albert Dien, Chair: Joan Piggot, 11 am – 12:45 pm
SESSION II. Gender and Medieval China
BREAK
Discussant: David Summers, Chair: Bruce Holsinger, 8:45–10:45 am
SESSION I. Silk Road Studies
PART I. Culture and History
Friday, March 12
KEYNOTE LECTURE
Thursday, March 11
CONFERENCE
China and Beyond in the Medieval Period
Cultural Crossings
March 11–13, 2010
Conference and
“Digital Projects in Asian Art and Humanities” Workshop
Campbell Hall 153, University of Virginia

COFFEE BREAK, 10:15–10:30 am
SESSION VI. The Cult of Avalokitesvara
10:30 am – 12:15 pm
Chair: Suzanne Cahill, University of California at San Diego
Discussant: Henrik Sørensen, independent scholar, Denmark
Interscripts of Compassion: Bodhisattva Avalokitesvara in China, Central Asia, and India from the Fifth to the Tenth Century
Denise Faby Ledy, The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York
Avalokitesvara Images at Candi Borobudur
Takashi Kozaka, Osaka University, Emeritus
Pilgrimage and the Expanding Territory of Kannon
Sherry Foxover, University of Kansas
Continued Engagements: Further Thoughts on the Significance of Compassion
Janice Leeshko, University of Texas, Austin
CONCLUDING REMARKS AND DISCUSSION
12:15–1 pm
Nicola Di Cosmo, Institute for Advanced Study, Princeton
LUNCH, 1–2 pm

Saturday, March 13
SESSION V. Image, Ritual, and Text in Esoteric Buddhism
8:30–10:15 am
Chair: Kurts Schaeffer, University of Virginia
Discussant: Victor Malt, University of Pennsylvania
Dhāraṇī Pillars in China: Function and Symbol
Lijing Xia, Ecole Francaise d’Extrême-Orient, Paris
"Whosoever writes this dhāraṇī...": The Ritual Use of Dhāraṇī Lecterns in Medieval East Asia
Neil Schmid, North Carolina State University
Concerning the Role and Iconography of the Astral Deity Sutrājñi (Miaojian) in Chinese Esoteric Buddhism
Henrik K. Sorensen, independent scholar, Denmark
Daoist Elements in Esoteric Buddhist Texts of the Tang Dynasty
Claus Hved, University of Virginia
COFFEE BREAK, 10:15–10:30 am
SESSION VI. New Buddhist Communities in Asia
4:15–6:30 pm
Chair: Karen Lang, University of Virginia
Discussant: Lewis Lancaster, Director, Electronic Cultural Atlas Initiative
Song Legal Codes and Anecdotal Writing
Gustaf Heldt, Stanford University, Emeritus
Punishing the Unfilial: A Study of Tang and Song Legal Codes and Anecdotal Writing
Ceng Zhang, University of Virginia
LUNCH, 1–2 pm

Sunday, March 14
SESSION VII. Art and Religion
8:30–10:15 am
Chair and moderators: Worthy Martin and Daniel Pitt, IATH
PRESENTATIONS
IDP: Mapping Silk Road Exploration, Art, Culture, and Landscape
Susan Whitefield, International Dunhuang Project, British Library
Silk Road: The Path of Transmission of Avalokitesvara Images and Knowledge in T'ang and Tangut Art
Dorothy Wong, University of Virginia
The Digital Archive of Buddhist Rubbings at Academia Sinica, Taipei
Jaying Shih, Academia Sinica, Taipei
COFFEE BREAK
IATH Seminar: Visualizing and Querying the Biographies of Eminent Monks
Marcus Bingenheimer, Dharma Drum Buddhist College, Taipei
Mapping the Dalai Lamas
Kurt Schaeffer, University of Virginia
The Process of Creating a Digital Edition
Christian Wittern, Kyoto University
ROUNDTABLE DISCUSSION
Chair: David Germano, University of Virginia

www.virginia.edu/artmuseum/culturalcrossings