

Dominic D. Z. Sur

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EDUCATION

University of Virginia
Charlottesville, VA

Ph.D., History of Religions, May 2015
Department of Religious Studies

Focus: Buddhism, History, Philosophy, Literature

Dissertation: “A Study of Rongzom’s *Disclosing the Great Vehicle Approach* in the History of Tibet’s Great Perfection Tradition”

Harvard Divinity School
Cambridge, MA

M.T.S., Buddhist Studies, 2009

Sarah Lawrence College
Bronxville, NY

B.A., Religion, 2007
Concentration: Buddhism

PROFESSIONAL APPOINTMENTS

**Associate Professor of
Religious Studies**
Department of History

Utah State University
Fall 2023–present

**Assistant Professor of
Religious Studies**
Department of History

Utah State University
Fall 2017–Spring 2023

**Visiting Assistant Professor
of Religious Studies**
Department of History

Utah State University
Fall 2016–Fall 2017

Postdoctoral Fellow
Department of History

Utah State University
Fall 2015–Spring 2016

Adjunct Faculty
Religious Studies

University of Virginia
Fall 2013–Spring 2015

BOOKS

The Practice of Philosophy: Metaphysics, Argumentation, and Identity in Tibetan Buddhism.
The University of Virginia Press, 2025 (forthcoming)

Rongzompa's Entering the Way of the Great Vehicle: Dzogchen as the Culmination of the Mahāyāna. Boulder, Co.: Shambhala Publications, 2017 (hardcover), 2021 (paperback)

PEER-REVIEWED ARTICLES

"The Art of Imagination at the Intersection of *pramāṇa* & *samaya*: normative epistemology & tantric ethics in early philosophical *vajrayāna*." In *Journal of Contemplative Studies*, 2024 (forthcoming)

"The *Dzogchen* Apology: On the Limits of Logic, Language, & Epistemology in Early Great Perfection." In *The Journal of Indian Philosophy* 50(1), 2021, pp. 1-46.
<https://doi.org/10.1007/s10781-021-09492-z>

"A Biography of the Translator, Rongzom." In the *Treasury of Lives: Biographies of Himalayan Masters, an Online Encyclopedia of Tibet, Inner Asia, and the Himalaya*. 2021.
(<https://treasuryoflives.org/biographies/view/Rongzom-Chokyi-Zangpo/6194>)

"An Ocean of Buddhist Intellectual Culture in Two Intertextual Drops: Parallel Text & Issues Pertaining to Rongzom's Doctrine of 'Mere Appearance' (*snang tsam*)." In *Journal of the International Association of Buddhist Studies*, 43, 2020, pp. 215–52. doi: 10.2143/JIABS.43.0.3289057

"Constituting Canon and Community in Eleventh Century Tibet: The Extant Writings of Rongzom and His Charter of Mantrins (*sngags pa 'i bca' yig*)." In *Religions*, Volume 8, issue 3, article number 40. 2017a. doi:10.3390/rel803004

INVITED TALKS

"Some कलाचक्र in རྟེན་མཆོད་ལུ་འཇུག་—And Some Questions." Shechen Monastery, Kathmandu, Nepal, March 9–11, 2019. Hosted by Universität Hamburg's *Academic Research Program Initiative Conference (APRI)* in association with the *Khyentse Center for Tibetan Buddhist Textual Scholarship and Tibetan Buddhist Textual Studies*.

CONFERENCE PAPERS

"On the epistemological significance of illusion and the illusory value of epistemology: early tantric philosophy in Tibet." *25th World Congress of Philosophy*, Università degli Studi di Roma, La Sapienza, August 2024

"Contra Dzokchen Skeptics: A Critique of Rationality and Scriptural Authority in Eleventh Century Great Perfection." *The Sixteenth Congress of the International Association of Tibetan Studies*. Charles University and the Oriental Institute, Czech Academy of Sciences, Prague, Czech Republic, July 2022

"Metatheory & Rongzom's Eleventh Century Assessment of the Conditions that Structure the Very Possibility of Logico-Philosophical Discourse," *XVIXth Congress of the International Association of Buddhist Studies*. At Seoul National University, Korea, August 2020. (postponed due to COVID-19)

"Philosophical Ecologies in Rongzompa's Eleventh Century Critique of Philosophical Certainty." Paper given at the *American Academy of Religion Annual Congress*, San Diego, California, November, 2019

"Networks of Association Constituting Rongzompa's Authoritative Great Perfection," *International Association for Tibetan Studies 15th Seminar*, École française d'Extrême-Orient, Paris, France, July 2019

"Social and Intellectual Criticism of an Eleventh-Century Tibetan Renaissance." *American Academy of Religion (AAR) Regional*, Brigham Young University, Provo, Utah, March, 2018

"Echoes of Samyé on the Path Through an 11th Century Treatise on the Great Perfection," *XVIIth Congress of the International Association of Buddhist Studies*, University of Vienna, Austria, August, 2014

"Issues in the Translation of an 11th Century Tibetan *śāstra*," *South & Central Asian Fulbright Conference*, Cochin, Kerala (India), February, 2013

CONFERENCES & PANELS ORGANIZED/CONVENED

Ecology and Buddhist Philosophy Panel organizer and convener. American Academy of Religion Annual Conference, San Diego, November 2019

God & Smog Conference organizer. Utah State University, Logan, Utah, October 2018

WORKSHOPS

Women in Buddhism: Religion, Politics, and the Arts. National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH) Summer Institute at the East-West Center, University of Hawaii, Manoa, Honolulu, Hawaii, June 5 – 30, 2023

BOOK REVIEWS

Review of *The Monastery Rules: Buddhist Monastic Organization in Pre-Modern Tibet*. By Berthe Jansen. Oakland: University of California Press, 2018. 281 pp. In *The Journal of Asian Studies*, 79(2), 2020, pp. 472-474. doi:10.1017/S0021911820000169

Review of *The Uttarantra in the Land of Snows: Tibetan Thinkers Debate the Centrality of the Buddha-Nature Treatise*, by Tsering Wangchuk, August 2017. In the American Academy of Religion's *Reading Religion*: <http://readingreligion.org/books/uttarantra-land-snows>

Review of *Finding Rest in the Nature of Mind: The Trilogy of Rest, Volume 1*, by Longcheпа, March 2019. In the American Academy of Religion's *Reading Religion*: <http://readingreligion.org/books/finding-rest-nature-mind>

Fellowships, Grants, & Awards (Selected)

- Tsadra Foundation (<https://www.tsadra.org/>), *Translation Grant*, 2024-2025
- Utah State University's College of Humanities and Social Sciences *Faculty Conference Grant*, 2024-2025
- Utah State University's Department of Center for Intersectional Gender Studies & Research *Travel Grant*, Spring 2023
- Utah State University's College of Humanities and Social Sciences *Reputation Catalyst Subvention Grant*, Summer 2022
- Utah State University's College of Humanities and Social Sciences *Faculty Conference Grant*, Spring 2022
- Utah State University's College of Humanities and Social Sciences *Faculty Conference Grant*, Spring 2019
- University of Virginia *Travel Grant*, Spring 2014
- Fulbright IIE *Research Fellowship*, 2012-2013: Nepal
- Ellen Bayard Weedon *Travel Grant*, 2011
- Julian Green Fellowship, 2011
- Foreign Language Area Studies Grant, 2011

PROFESSIONAL LEADERSHIP

Faculty Instructor, Kathmandu University's Rangjung Yeshe Institute, Gompé–Austria Salzkammergut, Austria, Summer Buddhist Studies Program: *Introduction to Buddhism: Philosophy, Practice, and the Modern World*, Summer 2019

Board Member of Directors for Light of Berotsana Translation Group. Light of Berotsana is an established 501(c)3 nonprofit organization with the goal of translating and preserving authentic Buddhist literature from masters in the esoteric Tibetan contemplative traditions, 2019-present

PROFESSIONAL AFFILIATIONS

International Association of Buddhist Studies (IABS)

International Association of Tibetan Studies (IATS)

American Academy of Religion (AAR)

Light of Berotsana Translation Group Board

DEPARTMENTAL SERVICE

Religious Studies Events Committee Chair, 2016-2023

Religious Studies Credit Transfer Request Equivalency Evaluator, 2018-2023

CHASS Committee for Tanner Talks, 2021-present

Middle Eastern History Search Committee, 2021

Judaism Search Committee, 2019

Committee for *God & Smog* Conference on Religion and the Environment, 2018

TEACHING EXPERIENCE

Utah State University:

Religious Studies Research Capstone

Introduction to Religious Studies

History of Ancient Religions

Introduction to Buddhism

Women in Buddhism

Buddhism and the West

Directed Readings in Tibetan

Directed Readings in Sanskrit

University of Virginia:

Tibetan Literature VII: Poetry, Meditation, Ritual

Tibetan Literature VI: Canonical Literature

Tibetan Literature V: Narrative Literature

Introduction to Tibetan Buddhism

LANGUAGE SKILLS

Classica/literary expertise

Tibetan
Sanskrit
Pali

Modern/spoken competency

Tibetan
Amdo
Nepali (basic conversational)
Spanish (basic conversational)

Reading competency

French
Spanish
German