

Conférences d'été du CEIB

Postmortem Pilgrimage: The *Journey to the West* as Mortuary Rite

Benjamin Brose

Associate professor, University
of Michigan

Vendredi 19 juillet
2019
15h-17h

Salle 5.09

Inalco

65 rue des grands moulins
75013 Paris



Contact

zhe.ji@inalco.fr

Informations

Accès libre sous réserve de la disponibilité
des places

La conférence sera donnée en anglais

Xuanzang (600/602–664), the celebrated seventh-century Chinese cleric, pilgrim, and scholar, is arguably the most famous monk in the two-thousand years history of Chinese Buddhism. His epic seventeen-year pilgrimage from China to India, his close relationship with two Chinese emperors after his return, his subsequent translation of hundreds of volumes of Sanskrit texts into Chinese, and the influence of those translations and commentaries on Buddhist traditions throughout East Asia have taken on mythic proportions in the literature, liturgy, theater, and popular culture of China and neighboring countries. After his death, Xuanzang was apotheosized as a powerful deity in China and came to be revered as both an exorcistic spirit and as a guide for the souls of the dead. The historical evolution of Xuanzang's posthumous cult is closely related to the development of the famous *Journey to the West* (*Xiyou ji*), a novel published anonymously in the late sixteenth-century. While the novel and its antecedents have been studied by numerous scholars, the ritual roots of the narrative and its relationship to the deified Xuanzang are not well known. This talk draws on recently discovered ritual manuals, liturgies, and ethnographic accounts to explore mortuary rites featuring Xuanzang and other figures from the *Journey to the West* story-cycle.