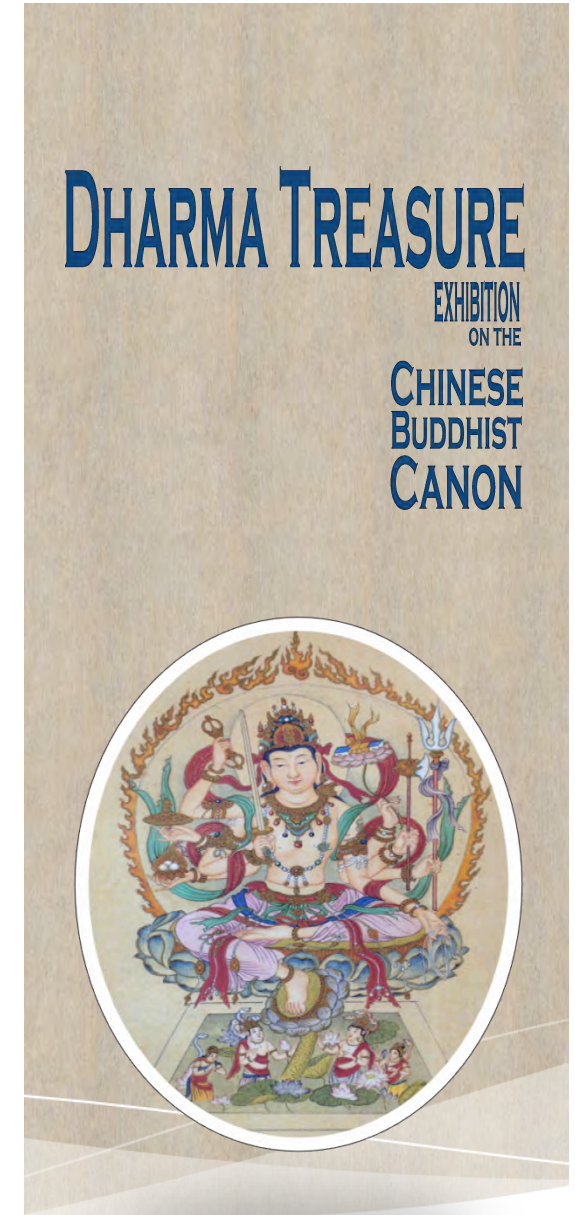


The Chinese Buddhist canon is a living tradition, and nowadays it quickly embraces the digital revolution. New efforts, such as the Chinese Buddhist Electronic Texts Association (CBETA) project in Taiwan and the Tripitaka Koreana project in Korea, have been made to digitize the entire canon and make it searchable and available online in a technically sophisticated way. Meanwhile, the printed editions continue to play their roles in communities as more beautifully packaged facsimiles and reprints of rare editions are produced in mainland China in recent years. These new editions in both digital formats and printed versions meet the demand of readers for research and devotion. It is anticipated that the tradition of the Chinese Buddhist canon will continue to evolve with time and serve as the core of the Buddhist tradition in China and beyond.



**A THE UNIVERSITY
OF ARIZONA.**

**MAIN LIBRARY
Second Floor Exhibition Area
(Ground Floor)
1510 E. University Blvd.**



Transformation of the Chinese Buddhist Canon

EXHIBIT - March 21– April 8th, 2011

PUBLIC TALK - March 21, 1-2 pm

“The Story of the Chinese Buddhist Canon”

Location: Main Library **Contact:** Ping Situ 520-307-2773



Description -

The Chinese Buddhist canon is an organized collection of Buddhist texts translated or written in Chinese. Its main content centers on translated Buddhist works from Indian and Central Asian regions and is supplemented with Buddhist and related texts written in Chinese. A carefully compiled canon assembles important texts in the Chinese Buddhist tradition and has acquired significant textual and spiritual authority. In Buddhist communities, a whole set of the canon has also been treated as the object of worship and devotion in all aspects of its production and circulation. Because of the complexity of its structure and historical evolution, the formation and transformation of the Chinese Buddhist canon can be considered as a phenomenon with religious, social, and textual significance in Buddhist history.

The evolution of the Chinese Buddhist canon is a long process. The formation of the Chinese Buddhist canon can be traced back to the latter half of the sixth century when a great number of translations of Buddhist texts necessitated a process to catalogue and classify these texts. The early form of the canon existed in hand-copied manuscript format and was widely distributed to well-established monasteries. During this early stage, the compilation of Zhisheng's *Kaiyuan shijiao lu* (Catalogue of Buddhist Works Compiled in the Kaiyuan Period) was a landmark event as this work became the standard catalogue for later editions to organize their contents. In the tenth century, the manuscript editions gave way to the printed editions which since then dominated the Buddhist world until the modern era.

The Chinese Buddhist canon exists in three forms: manuscript editions, the stone canon, and the printed editions. Although a few fragments of the manuscript canon and various catalogues have been discovered in Dunhuang, there was no single complete manuscript edition which had survived. While the Buddhist canon was written down on paper, some zealous Buddhists also started to carve the entire corpus of Buddhist literature on rocks and stone tablets, hoping that the Buddhist teaching would survive the period of the “Latter-day Dharma” (*mofa*). The tradition of the stone scripture (*shijing*) continued even after the printed editions became popular. After the tenth century, the printed versions dominated the Buddhist world.